

Benjamin F. Johnson (1818-1905)

Autobiography (1818-1846)

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CHAPTER ONE

MY CHILDHOOD

I was born July 28, 1818, in the town of Pomfret, Chatauqua County, New York. My father, Ezekiel Johnson, was born in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, January 12, 1776, and my mother, Julia Hills, was born in Upton, Massachusetts, September 26, 1783.

To my parents were born sixteen children, namely: Joel Hills, Nancy Maria, Seth Gurnsey, Delcina Diadamia, Julia Ann, David, Almera Woodard, Susan Ellen, Joseph Ellis, Benjamin Franklin, Mary Maria, Elmer Wood, George Washington, William Derby, Esther Meleta and Amos Partridge. Excepting Elmer W., who died in infancy, all arrived at maturity, and all were among the first to embrace the fullness of the gospel.

In 1806 my parents moved from Royalton, Massachusetts, to Westford, Crittenden County, Vermont, from which place, in 1814, they moved to the place of my birth, in western New York.

My earliest recollections are of pioneer life, clearing deep forests with great labor for my parents, to obtain but scanty living comforts. While gathering forest nuts, wild fruits and flowers, with the tender care of (to me) a beloved and beautiful mother, loving elder sisters, and companionship of my almost twin brother; these were to me the happy features of my childhood and early youth.

At about 4 years of age, the death of my 18-month-old brother, Elmer Wood, brought to me a deep and lasting sorrow and grief, that through childhood often wet my pillow with tears and saddened my lonely hours. My mother possessed high religious veneration, and early taught me faith

in God and the necessity of prayer. At this early period, so soon after the war of 1812, and in what was then a wild and almost frontier region, with heavy primeval forests to clear away before a meager crop of anything could be raised from the virgin soil for food, it seemed to require a giant fortitude and great patience on the part of all, to wait for results. My father for a series of years wrestled with the herculean task of clearing off the forests, but worn with incessant labors and the care of so large a family, he sought for a stimulus, and in my earliest childhood became addicted to the use of ardent spirits. Neither his labors nor his love for his family seemed to diminish, yet the fiend of unhappiness had entered our home to break the bonds of union between our parents and to destroy the happiness of their children. In looking back over my childhood it almost seems that I was born to be a child of sorrow, for such was my love for both of my parents that because of the troubles and unhappiness my heart at times would seem almost ready to burst with sorrow and grief, and a feeling always seemed with me to wish that I had died at my birth, or that I never had been born.

With the deepest sympathies for our father's hard labors all his boys early learned to be helpful, and even at six years of age I was accustomed to follow him in the summertime to the forests and fields, to pile and burn the brush, or in planting time, to drop the seeds, or in haying, open the swaths for drying the hay, and no one then old enough to become in any way a help was left to be idle. All our support and home comforts were produced by our home industry; from the wool all our winter clothing was made for the men and boys, and from the flax all the summer clothing both for women and men; also all the bed and table linen and toweling. At this period young women were not thought qualified for marriage, who could not, through their own industry provide all these things. Our cheese, butter and honey were home products, as also sugar, thousands of

pounds of which we made from maple forests; while soap and candle making, with beer brewing were common, homelike events.

While yet in childhood I was accompanied by my mother or those older than myself each Sabbath to the Sunday School and Presbyterian meeting. Here I learned to read and write from the Bible and to begin to be afflicted with the idea of a future punishment, with literal fire and brimstone to those who did not "get religion" or a "change of heart." Before I was ten years of age I was greatly exercised with anxiety and fear upon this subject, and until I was past 13 years of age, and had received the gospel, I did not cease to attend all their religious meetings and revivals, hoping I might obtain that forgiveness of sins that would release me from the fears of that awful burning pit so powerfully portrayed.

In my earlier years, although but a child, I was often led to wonder at the difference between the present and former religions, and especially in the life and character of their advocates. And in reading of the persecution of our Savior, His apostles, and the prophets, my very soul would become enthused with the wish that I had lived in their day, or that the day of prophets and revelation might come again while I yet lived.

In the year 1829, in our village paper, was published an account of some young man professing to have seen an angel, who had shown and delivered to him golden plates, engraved in a strange language and hid up in the earth, from which he had translated a new Bible, and I could hardly refrain from wishing or hoping it might be so. I think it was the year previous that there was seen at night in the heavens a large ball of light, like fire, which passed from the east to the western horizon. My older brothers who were out hunting coons, saw it and came home to tell of the wonder they had seen. When I asked my mother what its cause or

meaning was, she said it was one of the signs of the near approach of the coming of Christ, or the day of judgment. This remained upon my mind a subject of deep thought, and I afterwards learned from those who should know, that this sign was given the night following the day on which the plates were taken from the earth by the Prophet Joseph.

In childhood my advantages for parental instruction and discipline were not great, owing to my mother's large family and my father's intemperate habits, but no influence was so potent as the love of my parents and my home, to restrain me to obedience and to the love of truth. Yet in no degree was my mother or my elder sisters remiss in their Sunday readings, and teaching us from the Bible, or at other times when opportunity would permit. My school education was less than it would have been, had I loved school more, and possessed a greater aptitude for learning. My bashfulness and great susceptibility to slight or ridicule made me jealous and fearful, and did much to suppress my capability to learn. When about nine years of age my brother Seth, then about 21, commenced to teach our district winter school, and in summer it was taught by Nancy, my eldest sister, but from this period I was permitted to attend only the winter terms. My brother, Joseph E., who was just fifteen months older than myself, possessed all the facilities for acquiring education that I lacked. We were constant companions, and he, being capable of taking the first prizes in our school, my pride and anxiety all followed with him, so that if duties at home were likely to interfere with his success, I assumed them, even in staying from school, through fear that he would not obtain the highest prize or honors of our school and class. Thus things continued with me, and I made slow progress in my schooling.

About 1830 my oldest brother, Joel H., sold his farm and mill and moved out to Amherst, in Loraine County, Ohio, soon after my oldest sister, Nancy, was thrown from a horse and her thigh bone was broken close to its hip socket. This to me seemed a terrible calamity, especially as the doctors told us she would remain a cripple for life.

About this time we began to hear more about the "Golden Bible" that had been found by "Joe Smith" the "money digger," etc., etc. My elder brother, David, having gone to visit Joel H. in Amherst, Ohio, had remained there until the next season, in the spring of which the first elders, going from Kirtland to Missouri, stopped and raised up a large branch of the Church into which both of my brothers were baptized. Previous to this, rumors had come from Ohio of the spread of what was called "Campbellism," a new sect, of which Sidney Rigdon was then the chief apostle, and through fear that my brothers would become deluded by the new doctrines, my mother had written a letter of caution to them, which was soon answered to say that they had both joined the "Mormonites" (then so called), believers in the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon or "Golden Bible." This news came upon us almost as a horror and a disgrace. The first news was soon followed by the Book of Mormon, accompanied by a lengthy explanation, on the receipt of which my mother, brother Seth, sister Nancy, and Lyman R. Sherman, with some of the neighbors, all devoted to religion, would meet together secretly to read the Book of Mormon and accompanying letter, or perhaps to deplore the delusion into which my brothers had fallen. But their reading soon led to marveling at the simplicity and purity of what they read, and at the spirit which accompanied it, bearing witness to its truth. After a few days of secrecy I was permitted to meet with them, to hear it read, being then 13 years of age; and in listening, a feeling of the most intense anxiety came over me to learn more. It seemed as if I must hear it all before I

could be satisfied; and the principle of faith began to spring up in my heart to believe it. This was in the early fall of 1831. Now a bright hope began to arise in my heart that there really was a living prophet on the earth, and my greatest fear was that it would not prove true.

Later in the fall my brothers came from Ohio to see us and bear their testimony, and were accompanied by Almon W. Babbitt, then not seventeen years of age. They bore a faithful testimony, but neither of them seemed capable of teaching in a public capacity. As a family we were being converted to the truth, when unexpectedly there came to us Elders James Brackinbury and Jabez Durfee. Elder Brackinbury was a capable man and a great reasoner, and the Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon him, confirming the words we had already received. My mother, and Lyman R. Sherman, my brother-in-law, were soon baptized, shortly followed by the baptism of all my brothers and sisters who had attained their majority. At this time my father was employed upon job work as a canter in Fredonia and not being inclined to accept the gospel, would not permit us minor children to receive our baptism. My mother, brothers, sisters, brother-in-law and neighbors who were now in the church had always been esteemed among the most eminent in religious society, and the news spreading around, the priests began to howl about Faith, Prophets, and Delusions, and to do all possible to turn us away from the truth, calling publicly for "signs," etc., asking why my sister Nancy, who then walked upon crutches, was not healed? But upon the subject of her being healed I have written more full in "Faith Promoting Series."

Chapter TWO EARLY EXPERIENCES IN THE CHURCH

All my father's family, except himself, now believed, and with many of our neighbors had obeyed the gospel, except those under age. And now it seemed as though Satan was permitted to try both our faith and our fortitude, for after a few weeks of the most powerful and successful preaching, in the midst of ridicule, scoffing and persecution, Elder Brackinbury was taken sick and within a few days died. Our enemies now felt they had a great triumph; for where now were the gifts of the gospel when our strongest man could die, and my sister, though she had embraced the gospel, was yet upon her crutches? These things seemed at the time a great trial, yet in no decree did it dampen the faith of any, and while listening to the ravings of our enemies, the truth, with the love of it, became the more deeply planted in my heart.

The evening after the funeral and burial of Elder Brackinbury all were gathered at my mother's with the feeling of mourning, and praying together. Late in the evening my brother David felt troubled in mind, and when interrogated, said our enemies were then digging up the body of Elder Brackinbury. They soon started to the graveyard, which was about one mile distant, and on their approach found a party of men around, and one in the grave just ready to remove the body. They instantly fled and were pursued by my brothers and friends. My brother David captured a large and powerful young man, older than himself, and nearly double his size, who was brought before a magistrate, and bound over to appear at the next term of court.

My brother Joel on his return in early spring to Ohio, wished me to accompany him, which I did, and although only past thirteen years old, traveled on foot over 200 miles one week, carrying my bundle of clothing.

The year previous I had cut my ankle with an axe, took cold in it, and for a time it was feared I would lose my leg. The ankle was still weak, and the misery of that journey can only be known by my good angel and myself.

In the course of the summer, my father, Seth, Susan, and others came from our home in New York to Kirtland, Ohio, saw the Prophet Joseph, and later came to us in Amherst. My father then appeared favorably impressed, and to all appearance was becoming confirmed in the faith and truth of the gospel.

While in Amherst, at my brother Joel's a mania seemed to come over Seth, whom we all so dearly loved, and who was regarded by all as a gentleman and a scholar--a pattern for all young men. Apparently this was because of his extreme anxiety to see our father converted to the truth and redeemed from intemperance. Our first intimation of this mania was the discovery that he had left the house in the night, and when, after anxious searching and waiting for him, he came back about 10 o'clock A.M. next day, his mind in a wild and deranged condition. We found he had traveled near 100 miles in that short period of time. He returned home with my father, and remained weakened in mind for a few months, but was the same fall able to come to Ohio, from which place, after a short stay, I accompanied him home, after which he became to all appearance perfectly sound in mind.

Our hopes that our father would embrace the gospel were blighted, for all the light that had been reflected upon his understanding seemed turned to darkness, and so great was his darkness that at times it appeared like the buffetings of the Evil One.

Thus things remained until my father concluded to sell our home in New York and move to Chicago, which then was but a small frontier town. With this view he sold his two farms in the fall of 1832, and in the early spring of 1833 sailed up the lakes with the understanding that we were to give possession before the first of June and he would send us instructions as to when we were to come to him. But time passed, and no letter of instruction came; and being compelled to give possession of our home, we started for Ohio, and arrived at Kirtland early in June 1833. Some of our wagons and teams were traded for a home on what was then called "Kirtland Flat," close by the schoolhouse. My father at Chicago had bought a quarter section of land, and had written, but through some overruling providence his letters miscarried, and after waiting a length of time he disposed of his land and returned, to find us all at Kirtland. My mother being unwilling to leave Kirtland, my father concluded to remain, though apparently under protest, for his feelings had now become bitter through his disappointment. And here I will say, that although my father was apparently opposed to the truth, and had developed habits, yet he was a man of the highest organization. As a husband and parent, he was by nature the most tender and affectionate. As a neighbor and friend, most obliging and true, and was a man of truth and honor among men. Never was a question known to be raised as to his integrity, for his word was his bond; and in all things he was a gentleman in the fullest sense, except only in the habit of intemperance, which at times would seem to change his whole nature. He was a man of full middle stature, about 5 ft. 10 in. in height; of solid build, fine light brown hair, a mild but piercing blue eye, with light smooth skin, and of natural personal attractions. He was beloved and sought after by his friends, and for his words only he was feared and avoided, for with no other blow than words was he ever known to strike anything big.

In the fall of 1833, while yet there were but few saints in Kirtland, and those all of the poorer class, it was required by the Lord that a temple should be built at that place. As at first it was designed to build it of brick, my brother Joel H. was called upon to burn them. After obtaining a brickyard belonging to Brothers Joseph and Thomas Hancock, I went to work to assist in making them. Here my brother David, a young man of twenty-three years of age, 6 ft. 3 in. in height, straight, and of the finest build and deportment, through his ambition in labors upon the year, and in procuring wood with which to burn the brick, overtaxed his strength, took severe cold, and commenced bleeding at the lungs. He lingered for a few weeks in quick consumption, and died as he had lived, a true Latter-day Saint. His last testimony was given through the gift of tongues, which was interpreted by Brother Don Carlos Smith, who as his friend and companion, was present at his death, which occurred October 30, 1833.

Previous to this, the purpose of building the temple of brick was abandoned, as a stone quarry at easy distance was opened to obtain the rock for its construction. But such was the poverty of the people at the time of breaking ground for its foundation, that there was not a scraper and hardly a plow that could be obtained among the Saints.

At the laying of the cornerstones of the temple, in the spring of 1834 my brothers, Joel H. and Seth, and brother-in-law, L.R. Sherman, assisted.

On the night of the 14th of November of that year was seen a fulfillment of one of the noted predictions of our Savior pertaining to the last days, that we had so often heard quoted by the elders, that "the stars should fall from heaven as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs." But my pen is inadequate to give a description of the scene then presented, for the heavens were full of a blazing storm, from zenith to horizon, and a

view more sublime and terrible the eyes of man may never have seen. To the fearful it struck terror, and even some of the Saints seemed almost paralyzed with fear, for it appeared for a time that both the heavens and the earth were on fire. I gazed upon the scene with wondering awe, but with full realization of its purport as a sign of the last days. I afterwards learned that it occurred on the night following the driving of the Saints from Jackson County, Missouri.

The winter of 1833-34 I attended district school in Kirtland. Brother Joel H. had bought some wild land in the township, and also built a saw mill, and sometimes working for our neighbors, my brother Joseph E. and myself spent our first year, including the brick-making.

As we had no permanent business at home to occupy both Joseph and myself, and there being at home three brothers still younger, I deemed it better to look for some permanent employment, and engaged to Brother Uriah B. Powell to learn the saddlery business at \$24 a year with board. Previous to this, however, the mob had driven the Saints from Jackson County, and Zion's camp was preparing to start, in which I desired to accompany my brother Seth, and brother-in-law E.R. Sherman, with A. W. Babbitt, who was to marry my sister, Julia. But the Prophet deemed it not best for me to go, owing to the opposition of my father, and as I had not yet received my baptism. I was assured by the prophet Joseph that no loss should come to me for waiting, for although not fully a member I had partaken of every hope, desire, and spiritual influence with which those around me were animated. It was with a joy almost unspeakable that I realized that I was living in a day when God had a prophet upon the earth.

In the summer of 1834 Father Joseph Smith, Sr., commenced to visit the families of the Saints and give patriarchal blessings, and greatly was

the Spirit of the Lord manifested among the Saints in the gift of tongues, with interpretation, prophecy, and the gift of healing. In the course of the summer Elder Jared Carter, a man then of mighty faith, came with other elders to our house, and seeing sister Nancy upon her crutches commanded her in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to leave her crutches and walk, which she at once did, and never again did she use them, although for years she had borne no weight upon her broken joint. We all knew it to be the power of God, and almost felt to shout Hosanna! to think our beloved sister was again sound in limb and able to walk. But in the midst of our joys then, oh, how many sorrows to us the future had yet to disclose. I now thought of what was so often said by both enemies and friends, in my native town, and felt that now my sister was healed all that would be needed for their conversion was for me to go and tell it to them. But all this proved a great mistake, as I may farther on relate.

After working with Brother Powell a few months as apprentice, he broke up business, and I sought employment in running a sawmill, carpentering, etc., until winter. Meanwhile many of the members of Zion's Camp were returning home, among whom was my brother, Seth, Lyman R. and A. W. Babbitt. My brother, Seth, returned quite feeble in health, having nearly died of cholera, of which a number of the brethren had died in Missouri. Yet he felt as he always did that he must be useful, and although weak in body he engaged to teach a large school in the town of Willoughby, a few miles from Kirtland. Here he taught while I attended school in Kirtland until February when failing health compelled him to return home. Here all was solicitude--our beloved brother had come home, perhaps to die--a brother beloved by all who knew him, of whom no unkind word was ever known to be spoken; by me more than beloved, almost worshipped! Must he--could he die and leave us? Oh the cruel agony of such bereavement to the young, to whom in such sorrows, life

appears so long and lonesome. But after all our anxieties, prayers and tears, in the midst of his testimonies to us and blessings upon us he died February 19, 1835. And even now, that I am growing old, and the time is hastening when I may, if faithful, meet and greet the departed, yet in calling back this and other bereavements of my youth, my heart again swells with emotion and my eyes become blind with tears. Yet there was one consolation that the Lord had reserved for me, relating to this brother that I will relate:

During his sickness a personage appeared to him and told him that had he retained his faith and his desire to live, there was a work for him to do on earth, but that it was all well, for a greater work was now awaiting him, and that the Lord would raise up another to do his earthly work. But the idea, that another was to do his work, and perhaps take his blessings, was not consoling to me. And it grieved me much when the members of Zion's Camp came forward for their blessings, to think that another might step in and take the blessing of one who had gone forth in feeble health and had shortened his days by his self sacrifice. But I had not long to wait for comfort.

In the spring of 1835 before I was baptized, my mother and all her children met at the house of my sister, Delcena Sherman, to receive from Patriarch Joseph Smith, Sr., our patriarchal blessings. He blessed all according to age until he came to Joseph E. and myself, when he placed his hands first upon my head. My mother told him I was the youngest, but he said that mattered not--to me was the first blessing; and in blessing me, among other great and glorious things, he told me the Lord would call me to do the work of brother Seth, who had been called away by death. In this promise there was to me more joy than ever before I had known; my dear brother was not to be robbed of his blessings, and if I could only live

faithfully his work would be done, and I should do it for him. I felt this was the greatest boon the Lord could bestow upon me.

Soon after this, I overstepped my father's objections and was baptized by Elder Lyman Johnson. My sister Julia was now married to Elder A. W. Babbitt, and I will relate here one item pertaining to him. The Prophet Joseph, in blessing him as one of Zion's Camp, told him of much good he would do in preaching the gospel, and how the hearts of people would be drawn towards him, and the greatness to which he would attain, etc., but that he would at last be overpowered and fall by the hand of an enemy. This Brother Babbitt also saw in a dream, which he related some years previous to his death.

My blessing from Father Smith was to be realized in spiritual ministrations and labors, while Joseph E.'s blessing related to the greatness of his work in temporal things.

Owing to my father's continued unbelief, opposition to the truth, and intemperance, it was deemed better that he should live apart from the family, to which he consented. He bought him a place in the adjoining town of Mentor, where one of my sisters would keep house for him, and where the younger children often went for a time to stay, and where I spent a part of my time.

At this period, upon my mother rested the responsibility of providing for the family, consisting of three boys and two girls younger than me, and my sisters, Nancy, Almera and Susan, who were older. With their assistance she commenced the manufacture of stocks, a fine article of men's neckwear, and of palm leaf hats, then just coming into use, both of

which they supplied to the merchants, and thereby obtained a comfortable livelihood.

At this particular period the [Kirtland] Temple was progressing, the Quorums of the Twelve and Seventies were organized, and the first elders were being sent out. Brother A W. Babbitt had already returned from a very successful mission in New York. Returning to his field of labor he invited me to accompany him to my native town in the same state, which I was very anxious to do, as I had not forgotten how all our neighbors had promised to believe and obey the Gospel if my sister Nancy should ever again be able to walk. I knew she had been healed by the power of God, and I thought it only necessary that I should go and tell them so, and all would at once be converted. But it would require money to go with, which it was almost impossible to obtain in Kirtland. About all the circulating medium among the Saints was the "Kirtland Scrip," signed by the Prophet Joseph and others, which originated in the "Kirtland Bank." Of this "scrip" I had procured as much as would be needed for my expenses for the journey, but no one would think of giving coin in exchange except at a great discount, and that would leave my amount too small. So after pondering the matter for a time in great anxiety, I took my scrip to the Prophet Joseph, told him where I wanted to go, and asked if he would give me money in place of it. He said, "Yes, Bennie, I will. It is right for you to go." And he comforted and blessed me, and his words made me more joyful than did the money, which I so much desired, and in other ways I now began to be better acquainted and more familiar with him.

The forepart of October [1835] I started with Brother Babbitt to visit my native place, designing to take steamboat at Fairport for Dunkirk, but storms were rising, and fearful of the waters we traveled through mud and storm on foot over 150 miles to the place of my birth. I had been

absent about two years and a half, and although my old companions and neighbors seemed glad to see me, I soon learned that they were not so anxious to see me as I had been to visit them. When I told them my sister was healed, and that it was by the power of God, all interest seemed dead, and they felt no desire to talk upon the subject. After a few days of disappointment and chagrin, disgusted at my overanxiety to visit them and my misplaced confidence in their sincerity, I took steamboat at Dunkirk and gladly returned home.

In the following winter [1835-1836] I attended the "School of the Prophets" with the Prophet and most of the first elders of the Church, where was first taught the Lectures on Faith, as contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, and grammar was taught by Elder William E. McLellin. I also attended an evening class in geography in which I rapidly acquired the elements of that study, which inspired in me a thirst for history and other reading.

But about the 1st of March of this year, my sister Susan, about twenty-two years of age, was taken suddenly ill, vomiting blood. All possible was done for her, that the loving sympathy of kindred, friends and physicians could suggest, but without avail. She lingered but a few days and died as she had lived, faithful to her religion. Just before death she called each of us to her bed, bore to us her testimony of the truth of the gospel, told us to be faithful to its trusts, bade us farewell, and fell asleep March 16, 1836. Such bereavements come with crushing weight. So much sickness and death tended not only to keep us as a family limited in means, but no doubt the more prompted us in humility to seek the Lord.

Previous to the dedication of the Temple on the 27th of March, 1836, all who had labored upon it were called together, and in the public

congregation received their blessings under the hands of the First Presidency. I had attended all the meetings, listened to the blessings given, and felt a great joy in these prophetic words that filled and thrilled me. Yet all the time I was thinking that these blessings would only be for those who had labored with their hands upon the Temple, and as I had not myself worked upon it, not being strong enough for such labor I would not receive any blessing, and it grieved me exceedingly to think that perhaps through my neglect I was to be deprived of that which to me appeared of more worth than all earthly things. When on the last day of blessings, I was standing by the door in the crowded congregation, and oh! how I did yearn for a blessing! And as the last blessing, apparently, was given, the Prophet earnestly looked towards the door where I was standing, and said to his brother Hyrum, "Go and see if there is not one more yet to be blessed." Brother Hyrum came to the door, and seeing me, put his hand upon my shoulder and asked me if I had not worked upon the Temple. I said, No sir," but it seemed like passing a sentence upon my fondest hopes. He then asked if I had done nothing towards it. I then thought of a new gun I had earned and given as a donation, and of the brick I had helped to make. I said, "I did give often." "I thought," he said, "there was a blessing for you," and he almost carried me to the stand. The Prophet blessed me, with a confirmation of all his father had sealed upon me, and many more also. I felt then that the Lord had respect for my great desire. Even to be the youngest and last to be blessed seemed to me a high privilege. When the Prophet had looked towards the door, I felt as though he would call for me, though I could not see how I had merited so high a privilege. But so it was, and my joy was full.

I attended the dedication of the [Kirtland] Temple and all subsequent public meetings. I knew of the endowments received by the elders, and learned of the ministering of the angels at the time of their appearance in

the Temple; but as I had not yet received the priesthood I did not receive the higher blessings. Greatly now was the power of God manifested in the gifts of the gospel, and a general joy pervaded the hearts of the Saints.

About this time measles and whooping cough spread through the town, with which my brother, then eight years of age, came nigh unto death, his condition appearing hopeless. My father brought to see him two professors from Willoughby Medical College. They examined him, and in great gravity whispered together, and without one word of encouragement left a vial containing some powerful drug to be given as an experiment. My mother had sent for the Elders and as soon as the doctors left, Brother Bosley and others came in. My mother said the doctors had given no hope but had left the vial of medicine, which she handed to Father Bosley, who threw it out of the window. He then administered to my brother, commanding him to be made whole, which he was, from that hour. When the physicians returned they looked with surprise to see so great a change, and were taking great credit to themselves, but when told their medicine was thrown out of the window, and that my brother had been healed by the power of God they were greatly chagrined, but made no attempt to deny it. I mention the above as one instance among many that were so common among the Saints in the early history of the Church.

In the course of that year, the Egyptian mummies were bought from Mr. Chandler, by whom they were received from Egypt. Great was our wonder in looking upon the bodies of those who, 4,000 years ago, were living princes and queens. And when the writings of Abraham upon papyrus, which accompanied them were taken from its ancient casket, it seemed marvelous indeed. And all rejoiced when the Prophet told us

these writings would be translated, which are now, in part, in the Pearl of Great Price.

It is proper here to say that up to this period from our commencement to settle at Kirtland, there had been by our enemies one continual persecution of the Prophet and contempt for the Saints and their religion. And such was their opposition and hatred towards the Temple during its construction, that it had to be guarded, not only by night but also by day; and the laborers upon its walls, while with one hand they held the hammer or trowel were always ready with the other to grasp the sword. Much of my time in boyhood was spent in assisting to prepare arms for the protection of the Saints. The lower story of my mother's house in Kirtland was at that time used by Brother M. C. Davis as a gunsmith shop, for the manufacture of defensive weapons for the use of the people.

Previous to this period occurred the great exploit of D. P. Hurlburt of Spaulding Manuscript notoriety. He was called "doctor" from his being the seventh son of his mother. He was of a conceited, ambitious and ostentatious turn with a degree of education, but of a low moral status. He had been baptized, ordained, and sent eastward with others, to preach the gospel. He labored for a time near Jacksonville, Erie County, Pennsylvania, but was soon for illicit association called back to Kirtland, where he was excommunicated, but afterwards rebaptized. He soon became enamored or greatly in love with Electra, sister of E. R. Sherman, and because she despised him for his immorality and rejected his suit he swore revenge upon the whole community and boastfully declared he would destroy the church. While preaching about Jacksonville he had learned of Solomon Spaulding, who once lived in that vicinity, and had written a romance called "Manuscript Found," and out of this he hoped to gain notoriety, obtain money, and work his spite upon the Mormons. So

he gave notice to our enemies that he had struck a lead to destroy Mormonism, and if they would come together he would tell them where "Joe Smith" got his "Mormon Bible." He soon collected around him the congregations of our enemies, and in pert and pompous style told them the tale he had concocted of the "Manuscript Found," which of course was good enough when they could get nothing better. And so they readily advanced him means to hunt up the manuscript, and were greatly in hopes that now Mormonism would be at an end. But to all of them it was a failure, but not to Hurlburt, for he had their money.

Soon afterward by them all he was most cordially despised. One circumstance I relate to more fully show his character. In the township of Mentor near where my father then was, lived an aged man named Randall. He was one of the wealthiest citizens and a great enemy of the Mormons. Soon after starting his anti-Mormon crusade, Hurlburt had married, and Randall had not only donated liberally but had taken Hurlburt and wife to his own house for a home. But when their disgust at his doings became so evident to him, he saw no more money would come from his dupes, and so he in connection with his wife, put up a job on the old man, and drew him into a woman snare, from which they would not release him until after payment of \$500. With this money, despised and hated by all parties, he left that vicinity. I then occupied a position through which I could obtain accurate knowledge of all that transpired on both sides; my father being regarded as an opposer, knew all their secrets, none of which did he withhold from me; and as Hurlburt had boarded at my mother's, I had good opportunity as well as reason for watching his course.

In the early fall of 1836 another wave of sorrow and bereavement was gathering to burst upon us. Nancy, my eldest sister, who had ministered

to us in infancy and childhood, who had taught us our first lessons both in the Sabbath and day schools, who had ever been as both mother and sister, always self-sacrificing, and uncomplaining through all the period of her lameness and feeble health, seemed now fading away in consumption. After all our previous bereavements, could we again endure this, another severe and crushing blow? And now just as I was approaching manhood, I seemed to come face to face with the great problem, whether as a family we were not all to die of the same disease consumption, by which three had already gone, and another fast sinking! She continued to sink until the 30th of October, when, like others, she bade us all adieu, leaving us her life's example as a testimony to the truth of the gospel.

Everything now seemed to confirm the idea of a short life for myself, if not for all my father's children. My muscular powers were small, and though large in vitality I had but small physical endurance. Through close application to my shopwork and long readings at night, I became effeminate and weak, and some influence like the whisper of the Evil One was always saying in my ear, "You are doomed to die young." At times I would remember the promises made by Father Smith in my patriarchal blessing, and the blessing of the Prophet upon my head, and a desire to live and fulfill them, and to preach the Gospel would enthuse my whole being. Then the Evil Power would tell me all these blessings were forfeited, for through wild shopmate associates while away from home, I had been led into temptation, which brought me sorrow and repentance before the Lord. But under no circumstances had I ever failed to stand firm in the defense of our religion.

After the death of my two sisters, my mother was unable to continue her business in town, and concluded, with my brother Joseph in charge, to move out about a mile upon a farm. In November, 1836, the Kirtland Bank

began to develop; the Temple was completed, and a large town was being built, by the gathering Saints. A wave of speculation was spreading over the nation, and it seemed the spirit of it was caught by the Saints. The revelation in which God had given but five years of safety in Kirtland for the Saints, in which to build the Temple and obtain their blessings had been forgotten, and all appeared to feel that Kirtland was to become and remain a great center of business and religious interest for the future. But the Lord had other and greater purposes in view, one of which seemed to be to show us the weakness of human wisdom, and the folly of our idolatry, by bringing us to see our idols crumble in our hands. [Apostasy] At this time, town property and real estate went up to almost fabulous prices, and a general rush was made into business of all kinds. Members of the Quorum of the Twelve and Elders on missions hastened home, bringing merchandise and means for general trade, while the Kirtland Bank issued its paper apparently with full confidence in the future. Goods were sold upon credit with great hope of better times; and "Why be deprived of luxury and fashion today," seemed to be the spirit of the hour. But when goods bought on credit were to be paid for, and notes became due for lands bought at great prices, then began a reaction. Disappointment engendered feelings which reacted upon fellowship, and men in high places began to complain of and reproach each other, and brotherly love was found smothered by the love of the world. The Bank having issued its currency in the same confidence now began to comprehend that its specie vaults were empty, with no possibility to realize upon collateral to replenish them. The spirit of charity was not invoked, and brethren who had borne the highest priesthood and who had for years labored, traveled, ministered and suffered together, and even placed their lives upon the same altar, now were governed by a feeling of hate and a spirit to accuse each other, and all for the love of Accursed Mammon. All their former companionship in the holy anointing

in the Temple of the Lord, where filled with the Holy Ghost, the heavens were opened, and in view of the glories before them they had together shouted "Hosanna to God and the Lamb," all was now forgotten by many, who were like Judas, ready to sell or destroy the Prophet Joseph and his followers. And it almost seemed to me that the brightest stars in our firmament had fallen. Many to whom I had in the past most loved to listen, their voices seemed now the most discordant and hateful to me. From the Quorum of the Twelve fell four of the brightest: William E. McLellin, Luke and Lyman Johnson and John Boyington [Boynton] of the First Presidency, F. G. Williams; the three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris. Of other very prominent elders were Sylvester Smith, Warren Cowdery, Warren Parrish, Joseph Coe and many others who apostatized or became enemies to the Prophet. I was then nineteen years of age, and as I now look back through more than fifty years of subsequent experience, to that first great Apostasy, I regard it as the greatest sorrow, disappointment and test through which I have ever passed; the first real experience among false brethren, the greatest sorrow and test for the faithful. But with all my faults I did not forget the Lord nor His chosen servants. And in this day of great affliction and separation by apostasy, I felt to call mightily upon His name, that He would never leave me to follow these examples, but that He would keep me humble, even though in poverty and affliction, so only that I fail not. This prayer of my youth I have never forgotten, neither do I feel that it is forgotten by Him to whom it was made.

In the summer of 1837 through failing health, I had left my employment and returned to my mother's and there was a season of great scarcity for the poor in Kirtland. A great financial crisis had come, and money could not be obtained. The Kirtland Bank, with all the "Wildcat" banks of the country went down. To make our Mormon bank

odious to our enemies and entail disgrace on the Prophet, as he was the president of the institution, the cashier, and secretary, Williams and Parrish signed and issued a large amount of bank notes to runners, with which to swindle the more ignorant people of the country, the disgrace of which did not follow its perpetrators (who had apostatized) but the Prophet and those who remained with him, true to the great cause.

The split in the Church was now so great, with the principal wealth on the side of our enemies, that they claimed the Temple, printing office, and everything regarded as church property. Writs were out for the Prophet and others for all public debts. So in midwinter with his father, Hyrum, and a few others he started as best he could for the far west. The printing office and material which our enemies thought to use to bolster up a church organization opposed to the Prophet was set on fire by Brother Lyman R. Sherman and destroyed. Those faithful to Joseph made all possible haste to follow him to the west. My mother and all of her children were of that number. But the same feeling still followed me that I was fated to die young, and should I start would not live to perform the journey. My anxieties at that time were not from a fear to die nor from a great desire to live, but there was a feeling almost akin to horror in the thought that my name would be blotted out from the living. And like Jephtha's daughter I felt to "bewail" an early death. Often I have felt to tell the Lord that if He would spare my life to see one son who would bear my name after me in honor to him, I would promise to die without regret; and it seemed that every ambition, hope or inspiration for life was swallowed up in that one desire.

In the early spring of 1838 an effort was made by the local authorities to draw the line of fellowship on practices which then seemed tending to demoralize, among which was dancing and late night associations, to

which little heed was paid; and soon a long list of names was left with the High Council to be dealt with, and notice was given to each by its clerk. I had never danced, and rarely attended a party, but from some cause my name was in the list, and I received notice to appear and answer. I answered by letter in a spirit of meekness, and said I wished to live as a L.D. Saint but was not satisfied with my present baptism, and if they felt it right to drop my name it would be satisfactory to me, for I would take an early opportunity to come in again by baptism. Feeling truly humble this spirit was conveyed to the hearts of the council, and they said Brother Benjamin's letter was satisfactory and carried with it a purpose to be a true L. D. Saint.

I now felt great anxiety that the way would open that my mother and the children (three brothers and two sisters younger than myself, with my brother Joseph who was past fifteen months older, and about twenty years of age) might obtain an outfit, for the journey was now my greatest desire. My brother Joel owned a sawmill with land and other property, and my mother owned quite a good farm, but now all real estate was as worthless as it had the year before been valuable, but with hope and increasing faith we all worked with our mights to prepare for a start the coming season to the west. By the 4th of July we had obtained just teams and wagons enough to carry the families of my mother and oldest brother with their beds and company outfit. To facilitate the matter all their most valuable furniture and goods had been shipped by water, to go by St. Louis up the Missouri River to Richmond, Ray County, Missouri.

Chapter THREE TROUBLE IN MISSOURI

Up to this time I had not concluded to go with them, fearing my poor health might make me a burden on the way. I felt it would be better to stay with my father and my sister Almera, who was married and living near my father in Mentor, and was likely to remain for a year or more. So, while lending all aid possible and assisting in their starting with the company I was not expecting to go with them; and not until they had started, and some refractory stock to be driven made it necessary for me to go with them for a distance, did I resolve to go.

As soon as this resolution was formed, a new faith and feeling sprang up in my heart, and I felt that the Lord had heard my prayers. I felt sure I was not soon to die, a dark cloud rolled from over me and a great weight from my heart; and to all in camp it was surprising to see how fast I increased in health and ability to assist in our camp life. But to none was it so great a surprise as to me, and I felt in my heart to thank God and to devote myself to doing all the good in my power. In starting we had joined what has since been known as the "Kirtland Poor Camp," called so from the fact that the wealthy had apostatized, and those who had means enough got an early start; while the poor, by all journeying together could make an outfit and travel with much less expense.

Our start was on the 4th of July, 1838. The company consisted of over 60 wagons and near 400 souls, organized under the direction and leadership of President Joseph Young, Elias Smith, Jonathan Dunham and others. All means for defraying expenses were put together, and so all were to fare alike, and did so long as they remained in camp together.

So large a company, poor in appearance, and known to be Mormons, passing through the country where runners with Kirtland money had swindled the people, caused us to be more or less objects of contempt and persecution, and in a number of towns writs were served upon our leaders to compel a redemption of Kirtland bank notes. But the blessing of the Lord was with us, and there was always a way open for escape, and friends always at hand just in time of need. So in a good degree of comfort we arrived at Dayton, Ohio, where, as means to defray expenses began to be short, it was deemed better to obtain work on a public road then being constructed. So we remained there one month, in which time I went twice to Cincinnati to visit my kindred and do business for the company. On returning from my last visit I found much sickness in camp, and some deaths had already occurred. The wife of Benjamin Willey had died and Brother Willey was very sick, also some children. So much sickness in my mother's family, and so much ill health myself, had made me acquainted with nursing the sick, and in some degree the use of medicine, with which I had commenced in a small way to deal, and to read medical works. And as I had now become well and strong physically I adopted the sick as my especial charge. Brother Willis appeared nigh unto death with typhoid malarial fever, and on traveling through the day but little could be done for him, but at night I gave him my undivided and sleepless attention. For three weeks in this manner I did care for and nurse the sick by night and travel on foot by day, only obtaining sleep by the roadside as I got in advance of the company, or while feeding the teams at noon. Often did I carry my little chest of family medicines and other small articles of trade to exchange for butter, eggs, chickens and fruit, and anything suited to the appetites of the sick and feeble. Such was the increase of my health and hopes that I felt that I could do or endure anything to prove my gratitude to the Lord, for His blessings.

In our traveling I was often ahead or behind the company, and so was liable to be interrogated as to who we were and where we were going, etc., and this afforded me just the experience I needed, and my answers and testimonies were never wanting. I often found myself surrounded by large numbers of both priests and people, but never was I insulted nor abused. On one occasion while passing through a town of considerable size in western Ohio, I stopped before a large tavern to answer a question. I was covered with dust, without a coat, and barefoot, and feeling mortified at my appearance wished to hurry on, but other questions were asked and I could not leave them unanswered, until I forgot to answer one question at a time and commenced to talk, and as I proceeded the people gathered, and when I ceased and looked around there were hundreds before me and all windows were open on both sides of the street, and crowded with listening women; and all appeared to wonder at the dirty, barefooted boy. But no one marveled more than myself, and it was near night when I left them and had eleven miles to walk to camp. The next day being Sunday, a number of carriage loads of people came from town to our meeting in camp, stayed for a time and inquired for the young man who had preached to them in town the day before, of which no one knew anything. I saw them come and go again but was too bashful to attract their notice or speak to them. Such evidences of the favor of the Lord, through which, by the power of His spirit I could bear a faithful testimony to the world was of great worth and comfort to me. In this manner we journeyed, and about the first of October arrived near Springfield, Illinois, where Samuel Hale and wife (parents of Mary Ann, who afterwards became my second wife) were taken sick, and Brother Hale soon died. It was deemed best that my elder brothers, Joel and Joseph, my mother and their families should remain there until the following season. Here Sister Hale also died, leaving Mary Ann, their only child, then some 10 years old, with my mother.

But I felt like going to the front, where I could again see and hear the Prophet. On the 13th of October we crossed the Mississippi at Louisiana, and began to hear of great troubles among the Mormons at Far West, and we were warned of the great danger of proceeding, but our camp was only stirred to greater desire to go on. Here I remembered my former purpose to renew my covenant by baptism, and as one of my associates, D. D. McArthur, was to be baptized, I went with him and was baptized by Henry Hariman. [Harriman]

About the 20th of October we camped at Haun's Mill, where President Joseph Young remained with his family and where the terrible massacre took place later. Here was massacred in cold blood, and in the most fiendish manner about twenty persons, from eight to eighty years of age, besides many men and women wounded, most of them my acquaintances and friends. One, [Thomas] McBride, a Revolutionary soldier of eighty years, was shot down with his own gun, and while begging for life was chopped to pieces with a corn cutter, or large front portion of a scythe, used by one Rogers as a sword. To this particular I may again allude.

On approaching Far West we were met by the Prophet, who came out to meet us, and I felt joy in seeing him again. As my sisters, Delcena and Julia, wives of L. R. Sherman and A. W. Babbitt, were both living in Far West, I had expected to remain there also, but I was counseled by the Prophet to proceed to [Adam-ondi-Ahman] Diahman to assist with others in strengthening that place against mobs gathering there from the adjoining counties.

On our arrival at Diahman, our camp was pitched upon the town plat which had just been surveyed by direction of the Prophet, and of course

each one was anxious to obtain the most eligible, or first choice of lots. As I was young and unmarried my choice would come near the last under the rule of "oldest served first." So when it was my choice I found I must take the top lot on the promontory overlooking the Grand River valley, or go farther away and lower down than I wished to. So I chose the upper, which at first appeared rocky, but which made the other lots appear almost enviable. When, after a few days, the Prophet accompanied us to this spot, and pointed out those rocks as the ones of which Adam built an altar and offered sacrifice upon this spot, where he stood and blessed the multitude of his children, when they called him Michael, and where he will again sit as the Ancient of Days, then I was not envious of anyone's choice for a city lot in Adam-ondi-Ahman. Yet I would not have it inferred that my inheritance there, or those given me elsewhere are to be especially guaranteed to have in future.

At Diahmon I was now without money, kindred or home. All means I could procure had been spent in comforts for the sick; I had not even a blanket and only a small supply of warm clothing for approaching cold weather.

On my arrival I was at once introduced into active duties, on guard at night, and in scouting by day or raiding upon the enemy, as the case might require. I was now nineteen years of age and in the flush of manhood. Too proud and bashful to make my wants known, or to accept gratuitous favors offered me, many nights I laid in freezing weather with nothing under or over me but the hay in the loft on which I slept. Many nights did I remain by the guard fire alternating between a roasting and freezing condition, as I changed sides to or from the fire, until the mother of President George A. Smith, who was always kind to me, learning my

condition, came to the log barn in which I slept and gave me a nice warm quilt, which owing to the circumstances I shall never forget.

Soon the Prophet came to Diahmon and called for me to come and board at Brother Sloan's, the place at which he stayed.

But times began fast to change; the people who lived around within miles of town had all fled; and all the Saints who had bought farms through the more northern portion of the country or elsewhere were now flocking into town, some of them bringing little more than their lives. It being now November and very cold for the season, a heavy snowstorm came upon many families with nothing but brush as a shelter, for the aged, or the sick or the mother with her babes. In this terrible condition some children were born. This to me was an appalling condition, but a condition still worse was upon us, for we were being hemmed in on all sides by our enemies and were without food. All the grain, cattle, hogs, and supplies of every kind were left in the country, or so far from home they could not be obtained except with a strong guard. So our only possible chance was to go out in foraging companies and bring in what ever we could find, without regard to ownership; and in this way corn, beef, cattle, hogs, bee stands, chickens, etc., with anything and everything left in the country that would sustain a thousand people, we took wherever it was found. Thus we did our best, to obtain food, dividing it as was needed.

At one time when away on horseback, stopping to arrange saddle and pack, I was left behind by my party, and in my haste I made more delay; and when my company was about half a mile ahead, two shots were fired at me from the edge of the woods not far from where I stood, but I got

safely away with all that I had proposed to carry from the deserted house of one of our enemies.

At this time the Saints seemed sanguine of our success in standing off all mobs and of ultimate triumph over our enemies in Missouri. But with me it was different, for although I took hold earnestly to fill every calling and to brave danger, yet it was with a constant assurance in my own mind, seemingly prophetic, that we would be overcome by our enemies.

Coming one morning just at daylight from off picket duty I saw a squad of brethren, among whom was my then intimate friend and bosom companion, W. D. Huntington, brother of Sister Zina D., and I asked where they were going, but he only took time to say, "Come and see." So without food other than a piece of corn cake or "dodger" as it was then termed, and after an all-night guard and fast, I started upon a two-year-old colt which by some circumstance I had got astride of, and fell into rank with a company of near twenty mounted men, with Cornelius P. Lot as our Captain. I soon learned our destination was to Taylor's on Grand River, about nine miles above, where it was said arms and ammunition were held for the use of the mob. On arriving opposite the houses, which were on the river bank, we saw a commotion, and persons step back into the cornfield which was close by. We hastily crossed the river, surrounded the house, and myself with others, went for those who had fled. One man I saw and followed, and as he dodged behind a large oak stub, Alex. Williams came on one side as I came on the other. Thus we caught him. It was the first prisoner I had ever assisted to take, and I learned something of the influence of fear upon the human heart; for as we put our hands upon his shoulders there was such a look of expectant death, and such begging for his life, and then to see a fine looking married man so filled with fear that he sank upon the ground. This was one of the Taylors to

whom again I may refer. But we calmed his fears, told him for what purpose we had come, and that if there really were no arms or ammunition stored there to be used against us, we should leave them as we found them; but if we found they had those things we would burn them out. There were two men with a number of women and children, and all affirmed that there was nothing of the kind there. After a thorough search of houses, barns, etc., our captain ordered a search in the cornfields to hunt the cornshocks, which soon resulted in the discovery of arms and ammunition and of their falsehoods. The females hastily took from the houses what they could carry, and here I might say there was almost a trial of my faith in my pity for our enemies, even those who were plotting our destruction. Among the women was one, young married and apparently near her confinement, and another with small children and not a wagon, and many miles away from any of their friends, and snow had begun already (in November) [probably October] to fall. My sympathies were drawn toward the women and children, but I would in no degree let them deter me from duty. So while others were pillaging for something to carry away, I was doing my best to protect, as far as possible, the lives and comfort of the families who were dependent on getting away upon horseback. When the horses were brought up for their use, there was one animal with a side saddle, on which the young woman was to get away; but it was taken away by one Sloan, who had kept the boarding house where I stayed, a man of education and apparently a gentleman. It was too much for me, so I took the animal away from him by force, and put her upon it, and then got from another roll of homemade cloth and fastened it on behind her. While others were doing the burning and plunder, my mission was of mercy so far as duty would permit. But of course I made enemies at home, and became more known by those who were our avowed enemies. Before noon we had set all on and left upon a circuitous route towards home. As yet I had had nothing to eat and was

much in need of food, and before starting went to a beehive and took in the hollow of a half pumpkin some beautiful white comb honey, ate a little as I went, looked at it and wished I might eat more, but as I could not, I set it upon a stump, where I have many times thought of it through the 56 years that have since passed.

On our way home our company divided to scout in different directions, and we soon came upon a fine looking band of horses following a brood mare with a bell. As I was upon this two-year-old colt and wished one for heavier service I thought it a good time to make trial to get one. So as a comrade offered to take my gun and lead my animal by the halter, I took the bridle and started with two others who volunteered to go with me for the same purpose. It was now in the afternoon, and clouds were rising as though it would rain, but we pushed with hope and earnestness for our animals, who, like the ignis fatuus (will-o'-the-wisp) were always just ahead but never to be overtaken and caught. Yet we followed until it began to rain, and then we lost the track of our party and were lost. As it grew dusk we hastened, but failed to find our way or trail. After dark we struck a trail which we followed for miles, nearing a large body of timber, and knowing that there was a mob gathering on what was called the grindstone, and fearing we were going in that direction, we halted. As one of our party had a flintlock musket we managed by care to get a light started with it, in the trail we were following, and soon discovered that our party had not passed that way. I felt sure we were going in the wrong direction and said we must take another direction. I extinguished the fire, and as I did so and we turned our course we heard but a few rods behind us a party of horsemen who galloped off another direction, which proved we were near the mob encampment. We found and followed another trail until near midnight, and I became so weary and faint through want of sleep and food, I felt I should soon be compelled to stop. We were in some

creek bottom among the timber, and soon came to a clearing with a number of houses. There being no moon and cloudy it was very dark and their outlines could barely be discerned. We drew near with great caution and seeing no evidence of life, I determined to ascertain if anyone was there, and if so, to learn if we could get food and chance to rest. I told my companions if anything befell me to come to the rescue, or go and report. I knocked at the first house but no answer; went to the next with same result, and finding the third to be a barn I returned to the first and called my companions. We found doors and windows barred, but forced an entrance through a window. The first step after reaching the floor, I fell headlong into a cellar under the floor, where a part of what were called "puncheons," had been pulled up, with which to brace windows and door. I got out of the cellar, called my companions to bring their guns, by means of which we soon succeeded in making a fire. On lighting up we found some family had apparently just left, as nearly everything but beds, clothing and food, was present. I soon had a fire and on a pile of deer skins made me a bed, telling my companions that I could not watch, and that we should perhaps be discovered before morning. And so, wet, hungry and tired, and more dead than alive, I fell asleep. I had slept perhaps a couple of hours when I was disturbed by some call that broke upon my dead asleep but waking senses. "Who is there?" was repeated again and again. More asleep than awake I answered, "Me!" "What's your name?" came next, I said, "Benjamin F. Johnson." My name was passed around the house and I knew we were surrounded. Directly I heard one of the party say, "I know him," and he at once dismounted and came in. I saw it was Brother John Butler, whose acquaintance I had made in a snowstorm a few days before. When finding him one of our most valiant men with nothing but some green cowhide on his feet as moccasins, I gave him my only shoes that were of any value, and now as by special

providence had upon my feet a most excellent pair of new calfskin boots, by which I felt I had been the greatest gainer.

We told Brother Butler how we came there and he said we were then on the right road, but near nine miles from home. He had been out on special commission and was riding the Prophet's black horse, "Charley." He told his companions to return to Diahman, and that he would remain with us, which he did. In the early morning he led the way some mile and a half towards our enemies' camp, to the smoldering ruins of a house apparently burned the day before to find something to eat. The only things to be found were a pile of onions and a flock of chickens, one of which we soon had boiling with onions in a stray dinner pot. But we did not then, so near our enemies, feel great delicacy as to our cooking, for we were governed by the idea of "eat to live" and we felt that the quicker we could eat our chicken and onions and get from there the greater was our chance to live; thus the onions were but half done and the chicken none too tender. Close by was an old bell cow, and cattle scattered about on the prairie; so while we were getting our breakfast, which was not long, Brother Butler had taken a gourd shell with salt and commenced calling, "Sook bos! sook bos!" The bell cow at once started for salt, with all the cattle after her, and soon he was ahead on old Charley with a herd of cattle following. As it went by us we fell in behind and followed to Diahman. When within a mile or two we heard a firing of the cannon which had that night arrived, having been taken from the mob and rooted up by the old sow as related in history. Our animals, nearly forty head of good beef cattle for our famishing people, was a godsend indeed, and so regarded by all.

Here let me say that it should not be supposed, though we sought to repel mob violence and were compelled to forage for food when hemmed

in on all sides by a mob who had driven us from homes they had sold to us and been paid for, robbing us of everything but our lives and the little we could carry away leaving our crops, stock and household goods to our enemies, that we were common robbers because we took by reprisal that with which to keep from starvation our women and children. Ours was a struggle for our lives and homes, and a more conscientious, noble, and patriotic spirit never enthused man than that which animated our leaders in this just defense of our rights.

Word had come from Far West that all were now wanted there except a home guard for Diahman, but being absent at the time I was not enrolled with those to go. A few days later, now without a horse, I was alone at night upon picket guard when word came of the surrender in Far West.

My last night on guard at Diahman I have ever remembered as one of the most lonesome and fearful of my whole life. I was down the Diahman valley nearly two miles. The heavy dry grass which was up to my shoulders was on fire on the side of the road opposite to the wind, which was high and the flames reached apparently to the clouds. It required great care to protect myself and to do my duty. About 2 o'clock I heard the sound of coming wagons and felt almost certain that a division of the mob was approaching. In order to be more safe I went from the open toward the wood and brush-covered ground to meet them, and on hailing found to my great joy it was some families of our own die just coming in. General Wilson soon arrived with his 700 mob militia every man in Diahman was marshaled into rank and shed with all arms into Wilson's camp, where his soldiers were formed into an open square into which we "ere marched, and at the word of command laid our arms inversely upon the ground. We were then, under guard, marched out upon the street to

be insulted, abused and taunted by our enemies. As I was marching with others, one of the Taylors, whose place I had seen burned, came up to me in company with Col. Sashed [Sashel] Woods, of Dewitt fame, and said while pointing to me, "This is one of the men who burnt my father's place." Colonel Wood looked at me and asked if it was so. I answered, "Yes, sir." He drew his sword and pointing in the direction of Wilson's camp bade me march with quick step, which I did at the sword's point, to the General's marquee. Here I was at once put under strong guard, a prisoner in General Wilson's camp. I was now twenty years of age, over six feet in height, reticent and somewhat genteel in dress and deportment, and although not robust in habit or appearance, I could feel that where there was culture and refinement, my appearance commanded respect and pity. With the ignorant Missouri barbarians, however, I was a hated Yankee, and the subject for every insult. With few exceptions my guard was of the latter class.

The next afternoon I was to be brought before Adam Black, justice of the peace, a pronounced and bitter mobocrat of that precinct. Previous to this the State's Attorney (his name forgotten) from St. Louis, who had accompanied General Wilson, came to see and question me. He was accompanied by Dr. Carr of Gallatin, who made the first speech in that county to drive out the Mormons. Both questioned me closely over and over again to learn if possible who were our leaders in Diahman, and who led the party at the burning of Taylor's place. I had been trained to revere and tell the truth, and in my heart I felt earnestly to pray that my answers might not implicate any of my brethren. It seems that wisdom was given me, and a great strength of memory, so that in answering a question once I did not forget the answer or explanation I had given; and when I was pressed to tell who was the man who led us to Taylor's. I told them I had but just come to the place, and had made few acquaintances, but had

heard the man called Captain Cornelius, it being Cornelius P. Lot. They had also questioned the Taylors, and learned how I had treated them as prisoners, and had assisted the women, and even quarreled with my own companions for their sake. All these things this attorney and Dr. Carr drew out privately. About the third time they called to cross question me, their feelings appeared to change greatly, and they said to me in a kindly spirit, "Now young man, we have questioned you over and again, and you have given us always the same answer, and in no way have you contradicted your statement. We believe you tell the truth, and have been raised an honorable man. We know you are in a very bad fix here, and apparently but little hope for escape from conviction. You are the only prisoner here, and the chances for you are the worse, as there is much expectation in the army here as at Far West of bloody revenge. If you are the only one to answer for all the burnings and raids upon the old settlers then your case is bad indeed. But we are your friends, and unasked will do all in our power to save you."

In the picture they drew there was a terror, in the hatred of our enemies. The army there supposed all our leaders at Far West had been shot according to military decree, and they had come to Diahman full of the idea of vengeance in Mormon blood. This I was made plainly to feel through the guard placed over me at night, of four men who were relieved every two hours. One relief was composed of Haun's Mill murderers, including the fiend, Rogers, who killed Father McBride with the corn cutter, by cutting off his fingers, hands, arms, and then splitting his head. That same corn cutter, still crimson with blood, hardly dry, was swung over my head once and again, with boasting of what it had done and what it would yet do, and with oaths and cursings picturing the fate that awaited me. No fancied horror could equal the real horror of the presence and words of those fiends; and I have ever felt that their presence and

their words, with the corn cutter covered with blood, was the most terrible ordeal through which I have passed. Yet it was not the fear of their killing me, for I could think upon death calmly; but it was a something that grew out of being with and subject to those monsters: so much worse than the vulture to the giant pinioned to the rock, that there are no words to express it.

The snow was now nearly a foot deep, and it stormed almost constantly for days in succession, through all of which, during a period of eight days, I was a prisoner. I had no overcoat or blanket, and not even a stool upon which to sit. There was hazel and other brush around the camp fire, which one relief of the guard, more humane, gave me the privilege to cut and make a pile upon which I sat or lay down. Of food I have no remembrance of any ever being offered me, but there was one of the camp messes near the guard fire with a negro cook, and he never refused me the fragments he could pick up.

The second day after my arrest I was taken before Adam Black's court in a log cabin near the camp. Here I found my two friends. At first I was fearful of their purpose, but was soon convinced that the Lord had touched their hearts with a feeling of friendship and pity. And here a new feature inspired more fear or dread than the thought of death. I being the only prisoner, and Daviess County not being in the same judicial district with Far West, if committed by the magistrate I would be sent more than 100 miles in an opposite direction, to that of Richmond, where our leaders were imprisoned. The mere thought of being taken so far away alone to prison was indeed terrible, and even now after so many years, I realize that such was the dread associated with the idea of being among strangers, to await trial alone in prison, that I would have chosen to go with the Prophet, were it even to certain death, rather than go elsewhere

to be alone. The thought was a nightmare to me. I did not comprehend the object of my two friends, but could see they desired to prevent Judge Black from making a decree in my case. The court met again next day. Justice Black being an ignorant Missourian, they had him so completely entangled and befogged in matters of law, that seeing he could not proceed as he wished he jumped up in anger and declared he would have nothing more to do with the matter, and the military might do whatever they pleased with me. He left the court, ordering the officers to take me to the general's marquee, so I was soon returned to my guard. Now my great fear was gone, but it was common talk that I was to be shot.

Often it was said to me, "Now if you would only give names of some others and help to convict them you might go free." Feeling that I was a great coward I sometimes pondered the matter and asked myself, "Which would require the greatest bravery--to stand up like a man and be shot, or like a dog live to be despised by all who loved me; to make my parents who now loved me ashamed to own me, and my brothers and darling sisters, to think how they would weep for my shame, also those who had died and begged me to be faithful--could I endure such a living death?" Every feeling within me responded, "No! I am too great a coward ever to meet those I love, who are good and pure, and feel myself a traitor." My whole soul gave the verdict that I would not save my life at such a price. Many an hour while sitting upon my brush pile in the snow, did I picture myself standing by some large trees or in some open space with the weapons of death raised against me; and although my heart yearned for its young and beautiful life, not once did it shrink, or in any way consent to live in dishonor.

It was now understood that I was to be tried by court-martial. I saw but little of my two friends, but in some way learned they had repeated

interviews with the general. I here relate one occurrence to give in a degree a picture of myself and condition while a prisoner. I always sought to keep a cheerful face, and would, when possible, draw my guard into conversation. Generally they were young men. I sometimes got them to sing, and often sang a song myself; and sometimes a guard would seem to forget that I was a doomed Mormon, and would not say or do anything to insult me. With others it would be the reverse, and no indignity was too great, or insult too gross, to offer me.

The snow was now deep and the nights cold, and as it took much wood to keep up a constant guard fire, the wood must be piled up by day for the coming night. Soldiers were ordered out to cut the large maple and other trees, and at times I had volunteered to help the guard carry up the wood; and finally I began to be ordered to do so. To all this I complied cheerfully, until one time I was ordered to march for wood, which I did--took a heavy load upon my shoulders, and started for the guard fire. I was walking slowly, for my load was heavy and the snow deep, when the guard behind me ordered me with an oath to "step faster, or he would stick the bayonet into me." Upon this a terrible revulsion of feeling came over me, and had I been Samson, I should have felt no stronger. I threw down the load as if it had been a straw, and raised my hand as I turned and confronted him. I shook my fist, and told him I would not carry so much as another chip; that if I had a sword I would split him from end to end. My voice was earnest, and the Colonel just passing came quickly and asked me what they were doing to me. I told him I was packing wood for the guard fire, and the guard had threatened to bayonet me if I did not move faster, and that I would pack no more wood. He turned to the guard, and with an oath told him that if I was not from that time treated as a prisoner should be that they should all be put under guard.

I had now been a prisoner six or seven days and the brethren had returned from Far West. Our enemies were still very anxious to know who were the raiders, and especially to arrest others who were with me at Taylor's. There was also fear arising in the hearts of some of the brethren, especially Brother Sloan, with whom I had differed when at Taylor's. The brethren were now fearful that I would betray them to save myself. At last they sent my companion and friend, W. D. Huntington, to the camp to get an interview with me, and learn what my real purpose was in relation to the matter. Brother William came near the camp fire and having then a humane guard, I asked the privilege of speaking to him, which they gave, by my talking in their presence. In ambiguous words he conveyed to me the fears of the people that I would prove a traitor. At this a sense of injustice came over me not easy to describe. I had stood there alone in prospect of death, or worse, and I had been true, and now instead of praying for me and giving me their faith they were prophesying evil, or exercising a faith against me. A flood of grief gushed out of my eyes before I could hinder it. I told him to tell the people to have no fears, for with God's help I would stand true, even though they, instead of praying for me and exercising their faith for me, continued to prophesy evil against me. My very soul felt thrust to the center with their suspicions, and the feeling went to Brother William's heart, and on his return he recounted my words to his sister, Zina, and all who heard felt there had been neglect on this matter. Sister Zina asked all who felt like it, to come that night to her father's house and pray for my release. That night I felt as though I knew the people were praying for me, and all grief, sorrow, fear and hardness left me. When Brother William came the next morning to bring comforting words I almost felt I had words of comfort for him.

The mob and militia were waiting for Mormon blood, and it would not do to at once disappoint all their hopes, so I was kept from day to day,

even after the General had himself come to see and question me, and once sent for me to go to him for the same purpose, and determined that at the proper time he would provide my release or escape; to which conclusion I have no doubt he was persuaded by my two friends whom the Lord raised up to me in the midst of my enemies. The day after the prayer meeting about the middle of the afternoon, I was taken from the guard by the aide-de-camp and brought to the General's marquee and alone into his presence. He said he believed I had been well raised and had good parents, and from all he could learn had in every respect been truthful and honest, and that which had been proved of me at Taylor's burning stood much to my credit. He said that he liked my appearance very much, and would have liked me to go and live with him. If I would leave the Mormon faith and go with him, and make my home with him he had every advantage to give me to become rich, and he would see that I would be one of the richest young men of the state. If I would do so, he would give me a pass and furnish me a horse to go direct to his home. I thanked him from my heart, for his words were tender and kind, softened by a power he did not comprehend; but I told him I had parents back east, from whom I had till now never been separated, and that if I was ever free again I must go to them, for I knew my kindred were in great anxiety for my safety, and would fear I was dead until they saw me again. He said he did not blame me, and he would take the responsibility to give me a pass, but I must avail myself of the night time to get away, for old citizens around Diahman would certainly kill me if they found I was set at liberty.

About an hour before sunset he gave the pass, and a guard to go with me, to get some items and say goodbye, and especially to inquire where I could find shelter for the night--a few miles from town. He was told of a house four or five miles distant, where I could build a fire and keep from freezing. It was still cold, with deep snow, and I started alone just at

sunset, without blanket, overcoat, mittens, or any clothing more than a respectable suit of common thickness and warmth. I had a few matches with which I hoped to kindle a fire in the cabin to which I was directed, but when there found someone had been before me, and had not only burned the wood, but had burned the chinking of the house. I sought in the snow for wood to start a fire but could not find any, and for a time did not know what to do, but finally concluded to strike across the prairie ten miles farther, to the houses of some brethren living in a skirt of timber between Diahman and Far West, who had not been disturbed by the mob. To this timber I started, still wading in snow without a path. Late in the night I came to a house, and knocking at the door a man came out, and I asked for a place to stay. He told me I could not get into the house, and showed me the whole floor, to the door, covered with sleeping people. He said there was another house only a mile away, where I could stay, and gave me directions through the timber to find it. I lost my way and wandered for miles through the timber, and returned to the same house. The man then went with me until the path was plain, and towards morning I arrived at the residence of Elisha H. Groves by whom I was kindly received. The house was cold and the floor open, and lying upon only a rug I could not sleep for the cold, which was now fast increasing. Food was exceedingly scarce, and after all the fatigue of the night before, I had but a small breakfast. There was nearly twenty miles of bleak rolling prairie to go over, with deep snow before reaching Far West, the place of my destination. The air was full of frost, and the sun through the mist looked blue and cold, and the wind was terrible and would be full in my face. Under the circumstances it looked like a fearful undertaking, but no alternative appeared. Go I must, so I started with some miles of unbroken snow before reaching the traveled road. The wind blew so strong and steady that much of the distance I had to walk backwards to keep my breath. Thus I traveled until I had got about half way when I became so

numbed with cold and exhausted by fatigue that it seemed I could proceed no farther, without warmth and rest. I was upon a high, bleak prairie, and not a house, tree or shrub could be seen. It seemed that the angel of death stood before me, for my heart and hope began to fail me. Yet I did not forget to pray in my heart, and as I looked around upon the snowy expanse I saw just at my left, a little from the road a small deep swale, where the grass stood high and thick above the snow. I thought, "Oh that I had saved just one match last night!" At the thought I felt in my vest pocket and found just one match. With it, through the blessing of the Lord I fired the grass. I inhaled the heated air, and soon recovered warmth, and after a rest the wind was somewhat abated.

I made the remaining distance to the home of my sisters before it was dark. The little swale of tall grass and the one match when I supposed all were gone, did then and have ever since appeared as special providences to preserve my life; and in fact all the providences attending my imprisonment and liberation are ever remembered as the direct hand of the Lord for my preservation, to His own purpose and glory.

I found my sisters, Delcena and Julia, well and glad to see me again, but here I dare not remain. I must go from here by night, for the mobocrats of Diahman had learned of what they understood as my escape, and were now hunting me. Here I found an old associate and fellow apprentice--Arthur Millican--who was wounded in the Crooked River battle, where Apostle Patten and others lost their lives. He was now the husband of Lucy Smith, the Prophet Joseph's sister. He had been in hiding, but was now able to travel, and wished to go with me. Food at this time in Far West was very scarce, a little corn meal, ground by horse mill or by hand. We were obliged to wait one day to get meal to make bread for our journey, as we could not safely approach a settlement. At this time

Brother Sherman had gone to Richmond to see the Prophet Joseph, on which mission he took cold, and died in my absence, soon after his return home. He was a man of great integrity, a powerful preacher and by revelation was called to the Apostleship but died before receiving his ordination into that Quorum. On the third night after my arrival at my sister's we started, each provided with a quilt, a package of corn bread, with a little boiled beef; and my sister Julia had procured a pint can of honey, which with my young appetite I thought would be so good with our hard corn bread. I often thought of it as we plodded our way over a trackless prairie over which the sun was high and warm, until we came to timber upon the bank of a small creek. There we sat down to rest and eat such as loving hands had provided for us. I thought of my can of honey, and of the pleasure of sharing it with my comrade, but when I opened my pack it was not there--it had been left behind. As I realized its absence, a sense of disappointment and forlornness came over me, and as I sat upon the log I wept and sobbed, just like the big boy that I really was then.

Our destination was Fort Leavenworth, but our course was far around to avoid settlements. On the third or fourth day we arrived at the ferry and crossed into what was then the principal frontier garrison in the Indian territory. We at once went to the chief in command, which I think was General Kearney, and told him who we were, and why we had come, and asked for protection; told him we feared our enemies would come for us. He said if we wished to work for the Government we should have employment, and have his protection. Great was this chance for us; whereas we had been so long hungry, cold, weary and persecuted, here we found every real comfort of living with safety, and good wages, and it seemed in the kindly spirit of the offices, and the advantages offered, that the Lord had opened our way and led us there. Our work in general was the care and driving of six yoke of oxen, hauling supplies from place to

place about the fort and reservation. Our food was good, and our mess room contained about seventy-five persons, all sitting at the same table and sleeping in the same spacious room at night. Here I began to comprehend more fully the vices of the world: gambling, drunkenness and prostitution were all bare and openfaced, and the Indian women and the negroes were just as common as was the money that could pay them. Yet while we in no way joined in with them in their gambling and carousing, they treated us with respect and often with kindness. Soon after our arrival others came some for protection, and all to earn means whereby to be better prepared to leave the state of Missouri, which must be done by the first of April.

Among others came my brother-in-law, A. W. Babbitt, and his brother, John. Up to this time since leaving Kirtland I had been passing through continued scenes of exposure and hardship, all of which seemed to develop and increase my physical capacity, and I now stood 6 feet 1 1/2 inches, and weighed 175 pounds. I was not muscular but somewhat nervous and sanguine. I was no bully, in fact, I lived in a degree of fear lest some of my jokes or outspoken remarks might draw me into trouble with some of the hot heads of our mess room, and would try to guard my words and action on that account. After a few weeks there was a discharge of soldiers whose term of enlistment had terminated, among whom was one Orkey, a large, powerful, goodnatured German, who was regarded as the bully of the garrison. On his discharge he came directly to the mess room. As soon as I saw him I felt to like him, which, as we became acquainted became mutual. He, like me, was cheerful and jocular, and in that spirit we often played upon each other by words. One evening as we sat some ten feet apart, in braggadocio boasting of what we could do to each other, I felt unusually full of fun. As he dared to "try me on" in any manner, I paused to consider. In a moment, a feeling I cannot explain

enthused my whole being. I sprang to him, grasped one arm under his legs with the other around his shoulder, and lifted him as though but a child. I carried him across the room to his bunk, and raising him high up I let him down with his full weight upon it, when altogether it crushed flat to the floor. He got up, looked at me and then at his bunk and asked, "How could you do that?" But there was no answer I could make to his question. I spoke as pleasantly as I could under the excitement. I said, "We must reconstruct the bunk," after which we got tools and I helped him to do it. But he never challenged me again, and the next morning, as I came in from attending to my team I overheard him telling my messmates that they "had better let that young Johnson have his own way for he was a d--d good fellow anyhow, and no one in that room had any business with him." But I looked at the matter very differently, for in my normal strength I hardly felt equal to a boy, and if it was not from the Lord that the power came to me, I knew not whence it was. I at least had no further fears while at the garrison, of assault from anyone.

About the first of March, after learning of the death of Brother Sherman, my sister's husband, I arranged to return to Far West. On the opposite side of the river, which was over half a mile wide, was a horse I had engaged for the journey, and I must be there to get him and be ready for a start in the morning. When I came to the river it was near sundown and the mush ice was running fearfully. There was but one canoe, and that would cross but the once. As I had the promise of being carried over I stepped in the canoe, when six others came in also, which with the baggage was likely to sink the canoe. The ferryman told us it was dangerous, and some had better get out, but no one would do so. When the canoe was still her rim was not more than one inch above the water. It was a fearful and almost hair-breadth escape, skulling through the

masses of floating ice. But we landed safely, and ever since I have felt like holding my breath when the thought of that danger has occurred to me.

The second day after I arrived at Far West and found my sister Delcena a widow, with six small children for whom I must do my best to provide for their removal from the state, as well as for their support, Brother Babbitt and I made a trip to Richmond to learn what we could of the welfare of the Prophet and company, and also to obtain our arms that we had surrendered. Also, to look after the goods shipped before leaving Kirtland as before noted. It was then the time of the sitting of court, and we could not see the Prophet or learn anything satisfactory about the prisoners; and when we went to look for the goods shipped, we found the last of them just being sold under the hammer to pay freight charges. It was a great sacrifice, but the people had no possible means of redeeming them. Some had not come to Missouri, and all were now soon to leave the state, as agreed by treaty with the mob. We went for our arms as directed by the quartermaster, and all were found except the one laid down by myself, which was not my own, said to be the most valuable rifle in all upper Missouri. A common gun was given me in its place which I would not receive. I gave description of the one I had surrendered at mean. I saw he did not intend I should get it, and went to his superior and told him I wanted my own gun and would take no other guns. He said, "No," but opened a door into another room into which I followed, and among others saw my own gun. I picked it up and at once brought it out. He was angry at first, and said it was not mine, then said there had been a mistake made. But I had made no mistake and so kept my gun.

On arriving at Far West, I found my old associate and friend, William D. Huntington, then a bosom friend of the Prophet. We were much together and consequently I was often at his father's house and in the company of

his sister, Zina, and both Zina and her mother were much devoted to their religion. And often at Mother Huntington's did we have the most spirited and enjoyable testimony or prayer meetings. There the gift of tongues came to me in power, and never has it left me. To Sister Zina was both the gift of tongues and interpretation given, and under the influence of our spiritual enjoyment it seemed we formed a mutual attachment, which before I left Far West grew into feelings of reciprocal love, with hopes, which although not realized in full, did not hinder our being ever the warmest and truest of friends.

On the 10th of March, 1839, I was ordained an Elder under the hands of Apostle Heber C. Kimball, who then gave me notice that I would be called to go with him the coming season on a mission to England. Brother Babbitt and myself with all others in Far West were now busy in gathering up outfits to get away from the state, and some had already started. About the last of March, we left Far West to recross the Mississippi and find a home elsewhere as best we might. Roads were bad, with storms and cold weather, but we safely crossed the river at Quincy to meet many of our people, and to find that citizens of Quincy and of Illinois were showing great kindness to the persecuted Saints. Here my sister Delcena with her children concluded to remain until it should be known where the next gathering place would be. Seeing her provided with comforts and home, we continued our journey to Springfield, where my mother and younger children with my two elder brothers, and others who had started for Missouri still remained. We arrived there in the forepart of April, when there was a meeting and greeting, with gratitude to the Lord for having so preserved and brought us together again. I was now twenty-one, with increased health, energy, endurance, and animated with brighter hope than before had ever inspired me, all begotten within

me through a travail of tribulations and sacrifice since leaving Kirtland not more than nine months ago.

In looking back over the vicissitudes through which I had passed in that short period it seemed more like a dream than a reality; and when I think of it all as real, I feel a weight of gratitude to God that I find no words to express.

Chapter FOUR A HOME IN ILLINOIS

I soon took employment with Charles Lamb, wholesale merchant and banker at Springfield. Mr. Lamb, almost from the first, treated me with the greatest degree of confidence, and during the first week in his employ sent me alone on business to Beardstown, a distance of forty miles with a valuable outfit and near \$1,000 in bank notes to disburse. I marveled at his confidence, and was careful not to betray it. I soon received a letter from H. C. Kimball saying that I was called by the June conference at Quincy to accompany the apostles on their mission to Europe, and so I applied myself earnestly to save money to be prepared to accompany them.

While in Mr. Lamb's employ, associated with his family, my vanity was at least a little flattered even if I was not tempted by the partiality of a rich young widow who lived with and was a sister of Mrs. Lamb. She was married very young, had but one child, and was the relict of Secretary of State Falguar, who had died the year previous. I had often to attend them in their carriage, the finest equipment in the city, and I could feel I was not indifferent to her. Her little boy just commencing to talk, almost stole my heart whether his mother did or not. She was reputed very rich--a millionaire, and I felt very sure I could win her hand if I would, especially after I had overheard a conversation between her and her sister, who did not appear to favor her partiality for me.

I pondered the matter prayerfully, and I could not but feel that to marry a woman with wealth would be to bring myself to the world, and would keep me from my mission, and if allured away from my calling in the Gospel, then all the new and bright hopes that had wakened within

me would become a failure. I felt it would be a sacrifice too great even for a lovely wife with inheritance of wealth.

It was now drawing near my twenty-first natal day, July 28 [1839], and I learned that Commerce, in Hancock County, had been purchased as a place of gathering and that the prophet had escaped from Missouri and was then there with many others of the Saints. I knew that the time might be drawing near to leave for Europe, and as I wished to see the Prophet and other old friends at the new gathering place, I left Mr. Lamb's employ and arranged to make the visit. On my natal day, the 28th of July, I started on horse--back for what then began to be called Nauvoo, of "beautiful rest," from Hebrew. On my arrival, August 1, I found nearly every one sick and quite a number had died, among whom was Mother Huntington and both Zina and her father were still very sick. Of the Fisk brothers, three had died and our old neighbor, Capt. B. Brown, had lost his only daughter. Nearly all were down with typhoid or malarial fever which it almost seemed would sweep the place with death, for among all the families of the Saints it was rare to find one who was able to wait upon and care for another.

At this period there were in Nauvoo two young men, physicians from the East, graduates in medicine, Brothers Wiley and Pendleton. They went from house to house prescribing for the sick, and on my arrival, I was drawn in at once to follow them as nurse and care-taker, to administer the medicines, prepare gruel and other food, bring water, make beds, etc. Having arrived on horseback, and the sick being so scattered, I kept my horse constantly under saddle, and when persons were too sick to be left through the night without watchers, I often rode for miles into the country to bring young women. Often did I go for those called the Robison girls, sisters of General Robison and Brother D. N.

Wells' first wife. Those people were very kind, and the young women would come alternately as they were needed. In this way I had spent four or more weeks and had not yet pulled off coat or boots for a night's rest. But I was getting worn out, when on one occasion, in going for one of the Robison girls to come to Bishop Granger's, it being warm, I rode away without coat or vest, and on my return the wind blew, and we were drenched with chilling rain. I felt then that I was "done for," and sure enough that night I took a terrible chill with fever, and lay for a day and a half, most of the time delirious, until Sister Sarah M. Granger, herself sick, got word to Brother Hyrum Smith, who the second day sent me some gruel. In this condition I lay for days, until I procured Sapinton's pills, a compound of quinine, which was now the common remedy. They broke my chill for a time, and I was soon able to walk about, when I was called by the Prophet to his house and requested by him to remain there and take care of myself. Overexertion brought on a relapse, but I was soon up again, and waiting upon the sick. At this time there was living in one of the Prophet's homes, Father G. W. Harris, then, I think, President of the High council, who had married the widow of Wm. Morgan of Free Mason fame, and who left two children, Lucinda and Thomas. Lucinda, then 16 years of age, appeared to be very lovable, both in purity and beauty, and being often companions naturally drew us together in feeling. The Prophet, seeing our partiality for each other told me to make her my wife, seeming to enjoin it upon me. I at once moved to that object, and found there was a mutuality of feeling between us, and we soon pledged our vows to each other. The Prophet at this time sick with the fever, chose me his constant nurse and companion, and I will here say, as a valuable hint to the wise, that the sanitary treatment of copiously flushing the colon with water, much upon the present "Hall System," was about his only remedy.

At this time, with so much sickness and death, a great fear began to prevail, with a desire in some to abandon Nauvoo, and with this feeling President Rigdon was greatly exercised, making grave complaints. The Prophet now arose in great power, shook off his own sickness, went to Brother Rigdon, rebuked his fearful and complaining spirit, and told him to repent or a scourge from the Lord awaited him. Those being sick he commanded to be healed, which they were. He then called for a skiff and crossed the river to Montrose, where he found Elijah Fordham, drawing apparently his last breath. By his command life returned and he arose and was at once made whole. The Prophet then visited Brother Noble and other places, full of the power of God, healing the sick, as has been heretofore written in his life, all of which with many other things I know to be true, for I was with him as a younger brother and companion much of the time.

It was now about the first of October. The Prophet was again well. I was at his house again, sick, and it seemed to me nigh unto death, when a letter came from Springfield, to say my mother and sister, Mary, were very sick, and anxious for my return. I obtained more quinine pills, took double doses, and found my fever again broken. I had now been in Nauvoo over two months, had spent nearly all my money, so carefully saved for my mission, had ruined all my best clothing, and of over a hundred dollars, had but ten left. I got my horses, gathered up my things, and in haste, prepared to start. I felt worn, sick, poor, and sad at thought of leaving so many with whom I had so long been in affection. I handed my last bank note to Joseph, and asked him to take out the tithing. He gave me the nine dollars left and as the coin came into my hand he hit it from underneath, and scattered it upon the floor, at which I took hold of him and a shuffle ensued, in which in my weak condition, I came near falling in a faint. He held me up, picked up the money, and kept his arm

around me until I was going through the gate a few rods from the door. Then he put his hands upon my head, and blessed me in the name of the Lord and told me an Angel should go with me and protect me. This greatly comforted me, for I was very weak and my heart was full. The first night I reached my brother Joel's near Carthage, where he had been preaching and had raised up a branch of the church. The next morning I started again, hoping my chills and fever would leave me, so I could get home before they should return, but they did not, for I had not gone far before I was taken by a severe chill, followed by a high fever. This so prostrated me that about 4 P.M. I was found unconscious by the roadside by the Prophet's brother, William, and his wife, who were going for wild plums. They took me to their home at Plymouth, and his sister, Lucy, cared for me tenderly, and grieved much to see me, so very sick, start as I did the next day about 10 o'clock. That day I missed my chill, but the next was as the previous, or worse. That evening I found myself in the house of a stranger, who told me that I was picked up unconscious by the roadside.

In this way I got home, and found my mother and sister not so sick as myself, and the kind ministrations of friends was then indeed timely. I was very sick, money gone, clothing worn and spoiled. My mother and brothers after so much sickness, were in poor circumstances and resources limited. Now as to the prospect of filling a mission to England, or of marrying, all bottom seemed falling out, for in my sickness and poverty, I felt myself almost a burden to my friends. While staying for a time at Brother John Snyder's, I was treated with great kindness, but grew much worse. While in the chill that now came every day, spasms in my stomach became terrible, resulting in a fearful hemorrhage of the bowels in which I voided apparently a great quantity of blood. The doctor said if the chills came again I would die, and prescribed India cholagogue in double doses, in half the time named in the directions. I pondered the

matter, felt it was better for me to die as I was a burden to my friends, had no money to go to England, and I had been sick so long I almost felt a desire to die. But the medicine was got and administered to me by careful hands and loving hearts. Two days passed and the chill and paroxysm did not return, and the hemorrhage ceased. I was soon able to walk and life began to look hopeful again, and soon came Apostles Brigham Young and H. C. Kimball on their way to England. Both had left home sick, were still unfit to travel, and had left their families in great poverty at Nauvoo, but when they saw how sick I was, and without money or suitable clothing they did not urge me to go but left it to my own faith and desire. I much wished to go but was so diffident, had no missionary experience, and fearing they would feel me a burden I had not faith enough to start. They told me to take a mission east as soon as I was able and this I felt determined to do.

Chapter FIVE FIRST MISSION

It was now February in 1840. I was just able to be at a Sunday evening prayer meeting at the place of my residence, where I said I very much wished to get a conveyance out of Springfield, and that I would start if anyone knew how I could get one day's ride. James Standing, father of Joseph Standing, the martyr, said he would take me in a sleigh as far as the snow would last, and that he would be ready to start on the next Tuesday. I was yet too sick to sit up long at a time, and unable to walk more than a few rods at most, and had hardly yet attempted to speak in a prayer meeting. The devil said, "You cannot go, it will be suicide, You cannot preach and you will die in the street."

But courage was given me, and Tuesday found my few articles of clothing packed with a few books, in a valise, and some kind friends made me a bed in the back of the sleigh, and as I started my brother, Joseph, and some others made up a purse for me, of I think, \$12.50, which was all that I had. I have often thought of the strong feelings that at that time came over me. I felt I had been dependent on my friends, and that they had enough to bear without being burdened by me, and that if the Lord did not care for me now I would care nothing for myself. While my hopes were small, I would not be governed by fears; and my mother, living a little out of town, was hardly aware of my real purpose until I was gone. On the following Friday we arrived at Paris, one hundred and ten miles, and my health and spirits had in some degree improved. The snow was now gone, but the mud was deep in its place. Here I was left, and here now was a test of fortitude and perseverance that may find few equals.

Only twenty-one years of age, I was alone, sick, and among strangers without money, the mud deep, weather stormy, without education or

mission experience and bashful beyond the power of words to tell. Yet I did not wish myself back. The Lord had brought me carefully through an experience calculated to teach me that it would not do to depend upon my own wisdom and strength, and as for my own capability, it was really as nothing, and if the Lord had ceased to care for me I was of little worth. I told the Lord I had taken that mission because I was told to by His servants, and if there was anything a poor ignorant boy could do to please Him I was willing to try and do my best, but if He left me alone I was certain I could accomplish nothing. These were my feelings as Brother Standing turned his sleigh homeward through the mud in one direction, while I with my valise and a stick in hand slowly moved in the other pouring out my secret feelings to the Lord as I went.

I had forgotten to say that the fall previous, while I was in Nauvoo, Brother A. W. Babbitt with my sister had left Springfield for the Eastern states on a mission, and on passing through Indiana had stopped for a season at Pleasant Garden, I think in Putnam County, and had raised up a small branch there, of which I had learned, and I now had it in mind to reach that place.

My first day's travel after my adieu to Brother Standing I cannot quite remember, but I think it was seven miles, but remember distinctly my surprise, almost amazement, at its number. The kindness of Brother Standing and his self-sacrifice in bearing all expenses of that trip I can never forget. Just the distance from Paris to Pleasant Garden, the number of days it took to make it, I cannot now clearly remember, but I do not forget that through its whole distance it always seemed that the Angel promised by the Prophet was with me to open my way to make for me kind friends whenever I needed them. At Pleasant Gardens I found a Kirtland acquaintance in Brother Jonathan Crosby and family, who,

together with Brother Ross R. Rogers, his business partner, were in the cabinet-making business. They gave me a pleasant welcome, but soon after my arrival I again took the chills and fever. I was kindly cared for and nursed by Sister Crosby, whose kindness, with that of her sister, wife of Addison Pratt, I will never forget. I was soon again able to be out, and as it went abroad that another Mormon Missionary had come, I was invited to many places to visit and to preach, which, as yet, I had never attempted in public. So long sick, I was still feeble, and the chills still following me, my body was weak indeed, but my visits among the people had made them anxious to bear me, so I forced myself to the issue and when the congregation came I opened the meeting as best I knew how and arose with my eyes shut and commenced to talk. The spirit to talk came upon me and I preached one hour and a half as I was told afterwards, with my eyes tight shut, and this habit tried hard to follow me, and it was after many attempts before I could look upon a congregation when preaching. A number now came forward for baptism, and here I baptized my first convert. I now had calls to preach from many directions, and I was gaining in confidence and felt blessed in my labors, with the spirit of my mission. But unexpected events drew me from this field of labor. In the lurch here was Dr. Knights, an old resident, an eminent physician, a man in the highest esteem through this whole region. In early life he had come as a pioneer to the country. He had an extensive medical practice, and owned a large body of choice lands on Eel River, and had returned to Virginia and married a young and beautiful lady. Previous to this he had taken a poor young man named Shepherd a protegee, gave him a thorough medical tuition, and after his marriage made him an equal partner in business. The old doctor was very devoted to his young wife and his two little sons, and to give himself more fully to their society he gave up principally his medical practice to the young Doctor Shepherd who rapidly grew in prestige and medical skill, and was

soon upon the top wave of popular favor. From this eminence, to which his more than friend had elevated him, he descended with a treachery most ungrateful, and more deadly than the serpents face. Dr. Knights now found his idol was broken, for upon her death bed his wife had acknowledged that by the young doctor she had been seduced and he dishonored. He waited until his wife was in her grave and then with a short club in his hand he went into the office where sat the young doctor by the table. He closed the door, turned and took the key, stepped to the table saying he had come to kill or be killed, and told him the reason why. The young doctor grasped a pistol which was knocked from his hand, and he was beaten upon the head until he lay apparently dead. The old doctor then went out, locked the door and threw away the key. After a time he returned, looked through the window and saw his victim crawling around as if seeking to get out. He then procured a double-barreled shotgun and through the window fired two loads of buckshot into his neck and shoulders. All this did not kill him, but he got up and crawled out of the window, and dragged himself into the hotel across the street, where I slept. In the early morning I was awakened by the great excitement caused by the assault. All the physicians of the vicinity were called, and found his skull badly broken, but his brain not badly injured. They took out many pieces of bone, in my presence, put in a large silver plate, put back the pieces, sewed up the scalp, and within a few days he appeared convalescent. But the case was wonderful to all, and that Dr. Knights did not attend the young doctor in his terrible condition was a wonder greater still, and when asked why he did not attend Doctor Shepherd, he simply told them to ask Shepherd for he could tell them who was his enemy, and the reason why. Considering the doctor's great bereavement in the loss of his wife, I called at times to console him.

I felt small in view of his age and profession, but I regarded it as a duty of my calling, as he was a member of the church. He was greatly bowed in spirit, and my words impressed him to turn his heart towards me. At one time he asked if I walked to my appointments. I said I did, and he told me to meet him next day at his plantation a few miles distant and he would furnish me a horse to ride. I went, he sent for his band of horses and told me to take my choice. I chose a fine young horse just broke to ride, and he gave me money to buy me a saddle and bridle. So here I was raised almost as rich in feeling as a Lord. But I did not forget whence blessings come nor forget to show my gratitude to the hand that gave. And now in visiting him I saw there was something I did not comprehend. But the Lord gave me wisdom and discernment and I was so led in conversation with him that he soon unbosomed his whole soul to me, and told me he had yet to finish the job and kill his enemy. Here came a test of my influence to restrain him, and I confronted him at once upon the subject. I told him the Lord had delivered his enemy into his hand, he had had every chance to kill him that the Lord was willing to give, and that as his enemy was by a miracle saved from death he must now leave it in the hands of the Lord.

He was of the hot southern blood, and would seem to agree when talking with me, but by the next visit would have returned to the same feeling and determination as before. It was now said the young doctor would recover. This so wrought upon the old doctor, that I saw something must be done to deter him; otherwise he would walk into the sick room, and kill him, even should a multitude be present, for he cared apparently nothing for his own life. Only one idea enthused him--to kill the young doctor--all else was swallowed up in that one desire. What now should I do? I must save him from himself. To me there was a horror in the thought of his killing the miserable creature. I felt he would not again be justified and as he had become a dear friend, and was kind to me, I must

not lose my hold upon him. I must save him by saving the young doctor. I prayed, and a thought came to me, which I quickly acted upon. With pencil I wrote in letters like print to Dr. Shepherd telling him he must leave there without delay or die. I slipped the letter under his door at night. He found it in the morning, and the whole country round about became a ferment. A strong guard was placed around the young doctor, and every man in the vicinity was required by a public vote to come to the justice of the peace and make oath as to whether he had any knowledge of the writing or its writer. Every name was taken and every man was sworn but myself, the one who wrote it. I was not suspected of having anything to do in the matter. Dr. Knights saw himself foiled; he could not approach his enemy, being now suspected by the friends of Dr. Shepherd, and at the time it seemed as if Dr. Knights would go wild.

About this time I learned that Brother Babbitt and my sister had returned from Philadelphia, where he had been laboring with much success, and were for the present in Kirtland. Dr. Knights' conversion being the fruits of his labor, of course he was held in high esteem. The thought came to me to urge Dr. Knights to go at once to Kirtland and find Brother Babbitt. At first he could not consent to abandon the great and only object of his life. While holding up to him the higher obligations of duty to his little sons, he would seem nearly convinced, and turned from his object, but on my next visit, he said if I would accompany him he would go, but not by public conveyance. He would provide a horse and buggy, and we could go where and when we pleased. If I should consent to go, my air castles would fall to the ground, for in the vicinity there appeared to be a broad field for labor, and I had now a fine horse and outfit, and could perform a mission here, and do a good work, and return to my mother and kindred; and to her that the Prophet had given me, who when I left appeared to love me. It seemed the Lord had another purpose,

for just at this period I received a letter from her, saying, that as I was now gone and not knowing when I would return, her mother wished her to marry another man. Following it came a letter from my friend, D. Huntington, saying my Lucinda had through her mother's influence married a licentiate by the name of David Smith. Those who in early life have been too roughly awakened from a dream of happiness need not be told of the influence of such a disappointment upon an organization like mine. I concluded to go with the doctor, and felt that in leaving, my way might open into a broader and more distant mission field. I filled my appointments while the doctor was arranging his affairs, turned my horse back into the band from which I took him, and was, with all my idols broken, ready for a start.

I think it was now about the middle of July 1840, and the doctor not wishing his leaving to be public, met me in a neighboring town. I found he had an outfit fit for princes, and we started on our journey eastward. The distance to Kirtland I think was over 400 miles and it took some two weeks to make the trip. Where the doctor was known I was at times asked to preach, which I did.

I had always to watch as well as pray, for at times the old influences would be strong upon him that I was compelled to dog his very steps. Once he slipped from bed before I awoke, and I found him getting into the stage as it was starting. I pulled him from the steps of the coach and after his anger was appeased I asked him what was his idea in leaving me with his outfit and trunk, in which I knew was much money, what he would expect me to do with it or with myself. He said if he left me by no means to turn back, that all he left was mine. But had it been a thousandfold, the influence of money could not tempt me to loosen my hold upon him to keep him with me.

On our arrival in Kirtland, and in company with Brother and Sister Babbitt he began to greatly improve in spirit and feeling, and had no desire to return to the west but rather to go farther east. He said he would like to visit Canada, and asked if I would go with him. He also invited Brother Babbitt and my sister to go. In this I felt there was a purpose, and that if I went to Canada I would remain there to continue my mission. As Elder Babbitt had labored in Toronto, raised up a branch, and still had friends there, he was quite ready to go there. And so, after visiting my father and my sister, Almera, who had married a man in no way worthy of her, we enjoyed ourselves here a season, and then started as the doctor's party, he bearing all expenses, went down the lake to Buffalo, visited Niagara Falls, then went to Toronto and visited, where I found an apparent opening for preaching. When the doctor had tarried long enough in Her Majesty's Dominions, and was ready to return, I had concluded to remain and see if a field of labor would open for me in that land.

They returned and left me alone among entire strangers, over a thousand miles from home, on foot and penniless. It was then the rule to travel without purse or scrip and if the doctor offered me any money I had refused it, for I felt I had been a great expense to him. I was too simple hearted to think of what, by the blessing of the Lord, I had done for him. They returned to Kirtland, took with them my sister, Almera, and started for Ramus, twenty miles east of Nauvoo, where my mother and kindred then lived. The doctor went with them, seemingly cured of his mania for the young doctor's life. But what a reverse to my fond hopes, I must not reflect upon it, but move towards an opening for usefulness, and make friends by preaching the gospel, for I now felt friendless and desolate. My anxiety for the doctor had filled me with care, and had so

completely absorbed my thoughts that they must now be whipped back to the spirit of my mission. I soon realized that instead of being in a new and fresh field of labor I was in the stubble field, already harvested by older and more experienced elders, such as Parley P. Pratt, J. E. Page, A. W. Babbitt and others, and at most I could be but a gleaner. A few at Toronto, who had friends at Nauvoo, invited me to call upon them, and others, from a desire to learn particulars of our persecutions, etc., but no opening appeared for preaching. In a few country places I found openings to preach for a season and in Union District, some miles north of Toronto I preached for quite a season and was kindly treated by the people, especially those at a large farm home near by. Here I preached twice a week to large congregations, with good liberty, and perhaps began to feel a degree of self importance not approved of by the Lord.

At this time the prophecy of Daniel would be the subject of my next discourse. I had not yet learned the admonition of Paul "Let him that thinketh he stands take heed lest he fall." It had never yet been forced upon me, but it came, nevertheless, and left a lifetime impression upon my mind, for at the time appointed a large and expectant congregation filled the house. With a degree of self-confidence I went to the stand with a feeling akin to exultation in the large congregation, and in what I felt so sure I should be able to say to them. I opened the meeting as usual, took my Bible and began to read from Daniel, but the scripture that had before seemed so full of light was now dark. I turned others, but all were dark. The light of the Lord had left me, and I stood there alone before that large congregation, alone in my own strength, and in my nakedness I almost felt a horror of myself. I stood there speechless, and mortified. And oh! the sense of ingratitude to the Lord that came over me. To think how He had helped me, and that all I was He had made me, and now I stood there in my own strength, and was humbled in the dust, with a feeling that the

ground under me ought to open out and let me down out of the sight of all. The flood gates of my heart broke, and I wept. The congregation sat silent, and I could feel their pity. The thought came over me to be honest before God, the people and myself, and confess all before them, and as I opened my mouth, my speech came to me and I asked them if they had not often heard me speak to their understanding and edification, and if I had not always told them I was but a plow boy sent out like the apostles of old, to preach by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and that without it, I was nothing, as was now proved there before them; that for some cause known to the Lord, His Spirit had left me, and they now saw me in my own strength, in which I could do nothing. I said, "As you have come out today only to be disappointed, perhaps you would not be willing to come again." But I saw they believed me honest, and I said, "If you will allow me to have another appointment, rise to your feet." When all the congregation rose, I said I would preach again if the Lord would help me, at the usual time, and dismissed the meeting. A feeling of kindness pervaded all, but oh, how small I felt. I prayed the Lord to forgive my great ingratitude, and I would try forever more not to forget how dependent I was upon Him. To this day I have retained a lively remembrance of the experience.

At the next meeting, when the Lord had forgiven my sin and loosened my tongue, the people felt that the "Boy Preacher," as I was called, no longer needed their sympathies, for there was a power greater than theirs that accompanied him.

In this place it seemed there were those who believed, but none came forward for baptism, and I often caught the idea that I looked too young and feeble to baptize anybody. I was very thin, much afflicted with pain in my side, and at times I seemed to lose all care for my health and life, and

would sometimes stand three hours in vehement speaking to a congregation. I wished to bear my testimony, and felt that I could not die in a better cause, and that it was the Lord's business to keep me if I was of any worth to Him. But some of these ideas were the fruits of my sorrows and of my youth, instead of the wisdom that age and experience bring.

From this place I proceeded north to South Gilensburgh, where I was invited to preach. Here I found Brother Joseph Pegg and his wife who had for a long time been members of the Church. He was a well-to-do farmer, somewhat married to the world, while his wife was a younger woman of high spirit and talent, who wished to gather with the church. Her warmth of feeling for her religion made her very kind towards me, which appeared to offend her husband. After remaining there a few days in poor health I went into North Gilensburgh, upon the shore of Lake Simcoe, at the house of Father Draper, who soon believed, with all his house, but like those of Union District, they seemed to feel that I was too young and feeble to be trusted with their baptism. My constitution seemed terribly broken and I was often told I would not live to return home for I seemed to be declining with consumption, which no wise deterred me from filling every appointment to preach, and striving to fill my mission.

At one time on my way from Brother Peggs to Lake Simcoe, feeling a little weary, I called at a nice log cabin, and told the lady of the house I was a preacher of the Gospel, and was going to an appointment and had called to ask for a lunch and a few moments' rest. She seemed pleased, and at once set upon the table in nicest order and delicacy, the simple fare of the country, and said, "I gladly give you the best I have. If you are a servant of God you will think it good enough, and if you are not, it is too good." I said her food was excellent, but her sentiment was better, and I

thanked and blessed her for both. And this was the only time through all my mission labors that when alone I asked for food.

I will relate here an incident which occurred in relation to the gift of tongues which came to me. In this vicinity there were many Indians on an island in Lake Simcoe. The government had colonized a large tribe and they were scattered upon the borders of the lake. Upon the lake shore near Father Draper's grew beautiful broad-spreading cedar trees, with branches so low and broad that they appeared almost like a canopy or tent, and the Indians often occupied this as a summer resort for fishing, etc. One morning while taking my walk among these trees I came upon a number of Indian families encamped. I found one Indian who could talk very good English and was quite intelligent. I questioned him in relation to their traditions of the past, and of their hopes of the future. At first he did not seem disposed to talk, but seemed willing to listen. I commenced talking to him of their forefathers, when the Spirit came upon me, and I spoke in their own tongue. All the Indians came running to me, to listen with glistening eyes and great attention through all my talk to them. When I ceased, the Indian with whom I had been talking said, "You talk good Mohawk, and we all understand." This was manifest to me, the Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, and they would now tell me anything I wished to know pertaining to their religion. I learned that their hopes of the future were almost identical with our own, and they realized that because of wars and wickedness they had been cursed, but that through the ancient fathers it was promised that the power of their enemies should be broken, and a great prophet or prince would be sent to them by the Great Spirit. All of this was in the highest degree joyful to me, for I felt that I had been led to them to bear a great testimony to these Lamanites, that would not by them be forgotten, and that it would live in the hearts of their children.

The summer season was now closing, and I felt impressed to leave this cold climate, and return homeward as my way might open before me. I had preached much and borne a faithful testimony, but not one had I baptized; and now, over a thousand miles from home, I must perhaps go all the way on foot, if I lived to return, with health so poor. People had treated me kindly but I had only enough money to buy a few needed things for comfort, and to pay my passage across the lake.

Near the last of October I left Lake Simcoe and at Brother Pegg's found domestic trouble. Sister Pegg had learned of my starting homeward, and greatly wished to accompany me to Nauvoo, and would if I had permitted. I sought to console her with the hope that her husband would go in due time. But in that I was mistaken, and I have since felt a doubt as to the wisdom of my advice in a matter of that kind. She was his second wife, with two small children, while he had a grown daughter and children older, and he no doubt apostatized.

She with her children might have filled a useful career, and at that time having means in her own right would have opened a way for my direct return home. But the Lord had another path in which to lead me. While here a brother named Archibald Hill came to me with some others, from about sixty miles distant near Lake Huron to get counsel in relation to delusive spirits then manifest among them. In these matters I had been taught and gave them keys by which to know them, and they returned, profited by their visit. I felt sad to leave Sister Pegg, who had been so kind to me, and I have always wished to see her gathered with the Saints.

I left Canada about the middle of November and made my way as best I could on foot in the direction of home, when I arrived in Buffalo, oh! how I

wished for means to pay my passage direct to Kirtland, but such was not the lead by the unseen hand, there was another path marked out for me. I was now less than fifty miles from my native place, and although I had visited it once since leaving, I was then but a lad, and now I might bear a testimony of greater weight, and perhaps one would embrace the truth. In this hope I made my way to Fredonia, found many glad to see me; and the people, from a feeling of old-time friendship were willing to hear me preach, but could not be awakened to any love for the gospel. When told again that my sister, Nancy, was healed, they thought some natural cause had produced the effect. As she had since died, if it was a miracle, whythen had she died? Why was she not again healed? I bore to them my last testimony and left them, some of my old friends giving me a pittance to help me on the way, which was now cold, snowy and weary. I went back first to Kirtland, and then on to Nauvoo, the home of my kindred.

But the Lord had his own way, for when I came to Erie County, Pennsylvania, I put up at a tavern, and as I had traveled all day in the snow, and was very tired, I was just going to bed when it occurred to me that before I left home Colonel Harmon had asked me to call upon his friends in Erie County, Pennsylvania, if I ever went there. I had my slippers on, my candlestick in hand to go to my room, when the door opened and a man covered with snow came in and stood by the fire. Almost before I thought, I asked him if he knew any people named Barnes in that region. He said, "Yes, and you can go there right now if you wish to see any of them." I told him no, but their friends in the west wished me to inquire after them, and when I told him the names of their friends he was still more solicitous, insisting that I should go with him, and something said, "Go." I put on my boots, got my valise and rode eleven miles through the storm to the house of my companion, who was himself one of the Barnes. One of his sisters then living with him was a member of the

Church (Huldah Barnes) and afterwards was sealed to President H. C. Kimball. When we arrived about 11 P.M., he told her he had a Mormon elder, cold and hungry, and although a large corpulent woman, her steps were nimble until all my wants were supplied.

The word at once went out that a Mormon elder had come, and all appeared anxious that I should preach. I did so the next day, and the day after I was taken by others of the kindred to Union district, where I commenced to preach to a large congregation, and from there to a larger still. Here now a wide door for preaching was opening to me, but the enemy was not asleep. Soon the priests were out, came and filled the stand without invitation, with full expectation to overawe and squelch the Mormon boy. I opened the meeting, and arose with very bashful and boylike feelings, and commenced to apologize for my youth, want of learning, etc. Just then at a point farthest from me in the congregation, an old man arose and said, "Young man, he that is good for excuses is good for but little else." Instantly the words of Paul to Timothy came to me, "Let no man despise thy youth." And those admonitions to me were never needed again. I spoke upon the Book of Mormon and the second coming of Christ with good liberty, after which Rev. Jesse E. Church, a great and noted preacher, arose and gave out an appointment to preach the next evening; said he would down all this Mormonism; that he had once challenged Sidney Rigdon, who would not meet him in debate. The next evening I attended his meeting, and made appointment for the next night, which was again crowded. He then appointed his meeting in his own neighborhood and I heard him again, gave an appointment for the next Sabbath at the same place, at which I invited any present who wished baptism to arise. Seven of his own members arose, and repairing to the creek and cutting through fifteen inches of ice, were baptized by the boy for whom he had shown such contempt. Among those baptized were

some of the family of John Spaulding, brother of Solomon Spaulding of the Spaulding Manuscript story. This story, with every other previously invented, was paraded to defeat the Book of Mormon, and it should be remembered that in this vicinity lived Solomon Spaulding, and here he wrote "The Manuscript Found," which his brother, John Spaulding, publicly denied as being in no way possible connected with the Book of Mormon. After this, the great Jesse E. Church, as he was termed by his admirers, was silent. Instead of squelching Mormonism, and the Mormon boy, he had squelched himself, and few were left to follow or honor him.

Here lived Washington Walker, a Universalist, who took me to his house and made it my home while I remained in that country, often taking me in his sleigh or carriage to my appointments. He was a gentleman of culture, but of few words. At this time his sister, an eminent Presbyterian, came from Erie City to visit them. They took her to my appointments to hear Mormonism in which she seemed to take a lively interest, and on one occasion said there was one subject that greatly interested her, on which she wanted light, and wished I would make it the subject of my next discourse. This was "Foreordination" or "Election and Reprobation." If she had struck me with a club I could not have felt more stunned, dazed and foolish. I felt that I must comply with her request, but how? In preaching the first principles of the Gospel, the Second Coming of Christ, the gathering of Israel, Book of Mormon, etc., I was perfect, both in the letter and in the Spirit, but what did I know about Predestination? I did not know its definition, or meaning, nor of Election and Reprobation. And I was expected to preach upon that subject. How could I without one gleam of light or some key of knowledge to inspire me? I searched the scriptures and prayed, but no light came to me. The subject occupied my thoughts, and "foreordination" rang in my ear like a funeral knell. I wished to make excuse to the lady, but how dare I shrink from my calling?

Had I not professed that my capability to teach was from the Lord, and could I say I was not prepared? But oh, how dark it all was to me!

The day of meeting came, the hour was fast approaching, and the thought almost took my breath. I had not eaten, I had not slept, for Predestination had occupied my thoughts night and day. I did not fear for myself, but for the great cause to be dishonored, perhaps by me. But the hours would not wait, the congregation had assembled, the house was full, and my feelings almost as dark as suicide. I opened the meeting, arose, and mechanically, without a thought as to what I would read, opened the Bible and saw the first chapter to the Ephesians and read, "We were chosen from before the foundation of the world, to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God." Here now was the key of knowledge, and with it came the light of the Lord to fill my whole being. The visions of heaven were opened before me. I saw that all intelligence moved to the accomplishment of objects for their own greatness and glory, and to that end the earth was made, not upon the principle that nothing had put forth to beget something, but from matter as coexistent with spirit. I saw that the spirits of all men had been begotten and that they were the morning stars that sang together and shouted for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid, for they saw that upon the earth they would receive tabernacles, through which they, like the Elder Brother would "descend below all things to arise above all things." And that as He was foreordained a Lamb slain for sin, also was it foreordained that man should sin; for if sin had not come there would have been no death, and without death no pain, sorrow and suffering; and without these there could be no joy and happiness; for as light is comprehended through darkness, so pleasure is bought by pain, its opposite. I saw that there is opposition to all things, and had there been

no element of death there could have been no increase of life, "that man sinned that man might be, and that men might have joy," after tribulation.

All these ideas, and many others I presented and elucidated in a discourse delivered in a vehement and powerful manner, of over three hours' length, while the congregation sat as if riveted to their seats, and not a move did I notice from the time I arose, until I took my seat, and even yet all sat still as if in a maze.

But though all seemed to wonder, the marvel of no one could equal my own. To me it was as though from Egyptian darkness I had been suddenly brought into the light of the sun. The heavens had seemed opened to me, and of all I was the one most instructed. I knew it was all of the Lord because I had not desired the light for my own praise and glory.

An old Methodist preacher came to me at the close and said, "My young friend, you have taken us beyond all of my comprehension but I cannot gainsay one word." The lady left the next day, seemed very thoughtful, and treated me with the greatest respect, but she was of wealth and position, and I thought was sorrowful that all the great things she had learned were through so low and poor a people as the Mormons.

About this time Mr. Walker asked me to go with him to the city of Erie for a sleigh ride, which I did, and found a Methodist revival going on. His business was at the publishing house of the Universalist Champion Spafford, noted for great learning, and as we came into his large store, we found him and a Methodist priest in earnest debate on Bible doctrines. The room was full of people, and all were eager to see how it would end, or who would first "back down," as they termed it. And it was proposed by spectators that the first one to draw out from the discussion should

"forfeit a shilling." The Methodist had already become restive, and wished to get away, and drawing nearer and nearer the door, finally took his hat from the counter and slipped out. I sat in the corner with cap pulled low over my face and listened to Spafford's remarks of self flattery as to the ease with which all advocates of future reward and punishment could be defeated, until at length I asked if I might ask him a few questions, saying, "You might ask me afterwards as many as you please." He said, "Certainly, ask as many as you like."

"I wish," I said, "to know if your religion is all reward in future life, and no punishment." He said, "Yes, all is reward in the after life." I continued, "You believe the last fixed state of man is better than this earthly state can be?" "Yes," said he, "the last state of all mankind will be better than this state can be." I then quoted to him the words of Jesus, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man," etc. and its return, "the last state of that man is worse than the first," and also II Peter, 2nd to 20th verses. He stopped as though he had struck a sawyer, waited a moment, and all saw he was beaten, and raised the same shout to him, to pay the shilling. He then came to me pleasantly, asked my name, who I was, what was my religion, etc., wanted me to stop for a week with him, found I was a Mormon, and insisted on my staying to preach. But I had appointments, and the city of Erie had been harvested by greater minds long ago, and I must return. When I left he forced upon me books to peruse, which I returned without reading, and I have never seen him since.

For some weeks after my arrival in Erie County as a rule I held meetings somewhere each day, often preaching two and at times three sermons in one day, which in general were from two to three hours in length, and the time I occupied at that period in vehement speaking seems now almost incredible. Besides this, where I stayed people would

keep me talking often long past midnight. Often I was admonished by those who listened to me that I was killing myself, for the great exercise of mind so impaired my digestion that I could not eat. One cookie crumbed into my coffee in the morning was my breakfast, and the same, or a fried cake with tea was my supper for weeks. I was very thin and pale, but full of spiritual life and abundant energy.

With the most of the people it was the excitement of novelty. Their preachers had killed their own influence, and now they wanted someone to follow. It was not really the truth they were after, it was the sensation of something new, and as it drew towards springtime the calls for preaching began to die away. There was a general desire for me to settle there, and preach for a good salary, which all parties would contribute to pay, and give me a good support; and like the devil upon the mount I could have all the world if I would turn away from God and duty. But I knew it was a trick to flatter my pride and to lead me away.

My time now was not so occupied in preaching and my strength and appetite began to return, and being now much at home, I assisted Mr. Walker in his store, and also obtained material and made through the summer a few sets of harness, with trunks, saddlery, etc., but I could not resist the feeling that such occupation here was beneath my calling. Learning that Brother and Sister Babbitt with my youngest sister had returned to Kirtland, Mr. Walker kindly offered to take me in his carriage to Kirtland on a visit, which he did. Soon after our return they came to Pennsylvania to see me, to induce me, if possible, to return with them which I soon arranged to do, and left for Kirtland, where Brother Babbitt was then residing. I soon obtained means to start a small business in saddlery in Kirtland.

Chapter SIX THE CHURCH GROWS

At this time my home was with Mr. Babbitt, with my two sisters. Closely associated with my younger sister, as a student in the Academy at Kirtland was a young lady, Melissa B. LeBaron. She was an orphan, and in appearance, education and ease of manner, had no equal in the vicinity, and it was said there was a money legacy due and waiting her claim in a Rochester, New York, city bank. After making her acquaintance I perceived my society was not unpleasant, and as I was then highly respected as a successful missionary, and she, a young heiress, beloved by all who knew her, my friends hoped we would make a wedding to please them as well as ourselves.

It had been constantly before me that I should return home to the Church and my home in the West. I now applied myself earnestly to obtain means for my intended journey. Quite a large Branch had again been organized in Kirtland, and Bishop G---- [Oliver Granger] had been sent East by the Prophet to raise means to pay for lands that had been bought at Nauvoo, and so brought his family back to Kirtland. He was a man of eminent capability, but had suffered greatly by intemperance, which habit, after obtaining money, overcame him again, and so the money was squandered. He took dropsy and soon died.

Brother Babbitt had started quite extensively in merchandising, and Brother W. W. Phelps being there, it was designed to publish a paper. In fact, quite a feeling began to arise for again settling at, and building up of Kirtland, and for a time all appeared hopeful for a home and a business future to those whose duty, privilege or choice it was to stay there. But to me it did not seem like a home for the faithful and true Latter-day Saints. I was now often in the society of the friend and associate of my sister

Melissa LeBaron, "the heiress," as she was called, and I saw she was not averse to me, and I could look upon her with a feeling of pride. I felt attracted toward Melissa LeBaron, and as this feeling grew, it drew us naturally more together, to become better acquainted. Here was one the Lord had placed right before me, a young lady of culture and refinement, and a good L. D. Saint, who was ready in the coming season to go with me to the gathering place of the Saints. I knew the Lord had proved me in virtue and honesty towards those whom I had loved, and I could feel that He had brought her there for me, and I was just as certain what her answer would be before, as I was after I asked her to be my wife. It seemed to me the Lord had remembered that whatever I had earned I had cheerfully contributed, in assisting his Saints from Missouri, and in caring for and supplying the sick at Nauvoo, as also those of the Kirtland Camp.

I had now been two years on a mission and was returning home poor, and now the Lord had brought to me one that had enough to pay for all these sacrifices, one who seemed pleased to lay all down at my feet.

On Christmas day we were to be married, and so many were our friends, and such the interest taken in preparations that one might have thought it was everybody's wedding, instead of that of an unpretending and humble couple.

We were married by Brother Babbitt in the house in which the Prophet lived in Kirtland, and all its rooms were crowded. The only thing worthy of note, besides festivity and general mirth was the division of the company into separate rooms. The married people claimed us now, which was disputed by the unmarried, who insisted, that as bride and groom we still belonged to them. Each party laid hold of me to make good their claim, and before they knew it they had pulled me speechless, and really

came near killing me with their kindness. So we were at liberty to enjoy, and be enjoyed by both as suited us best.

About this time it began to be understood that the policy of again building up Kirtland was not approved by the authorities at Nauvoo, and soon came the revelation in which the Lord speaks of his servant, Almon W. Babbitt, as "making a golden calf" at Kirtland. [D&C 124:84] So came to an end the hope of remaining there, and business of course must go down, as those who were true Saints would soon gather to the West. Brother Babbitt now saw that he would be broken up in business. He felt hurt by the rebuke in the revelation, and he was in great temptation to complain, and to turn his heel upon the Prophet. I now saw it wisdom by every influence to keep him from an unwise step and induce him to return to Nauvoo. He had bought many notes and claims against the Prophet or the church, and with these he might be tempted to do a great wrong to himself; and such was my love for him that I felt to make any sacrifice to promote his love for the gospel and his fellowship in the Church. He now began to study law, wishing me to do the same, and proposed that we buy together a small law library. I consented, that I might be the nearer to him and better able to hold an influence over him for his own good. As myself and wife had to make a visit to her native place, Leroy, and go to Rochester to obtain the money due her, we invited Brother and Sister Babbitt to go with us. Obtaining a carriage and outfit we left for the east about the last of January to visit our friends and preach, as opportunity might open on the way.

On application for the legacy due my wife, it was found that through an order from Brother J. L. Holman, her guardian, her interest money to the amount of some four hundred dollars had been drawn by Bishop G., besides household goods of much value, left her by her mother, all

squandered by him in dissipation, leaving only the principal, which we obtained.

But while Brother G. possessed eminent abilities and was beloved and trusted by the Prophet, yet the way of the transgressor is hard, and today there is not a lineal representative of his in the Church.

About the time of his sickness and death a spirit of fanaticism arose and formed a party, who adopted him as its oracle, and almost as their God; claimed he had revealed to them the celestial law of marriage. Some of them being of the respectable and more wealthy class, I was induced on one occasion to attend their meeting, and being astonished at their doctrines I rebuked the spirit they were of, and by prophecy told them that without speedily turning from it, they would become disgraceful maniacs upon the streets, which proved more than true, as the same week men and women of previous respectability were now in free love, disgracefully and insanelly mixed up in the public street-- apparently a trick of the devil to forestall with disgrace and bring contempt upon a sacred and holy law that the Lord was about to reveal through His Prophet in Nauvoo.

Brother Babbitt had now concluded to close up business in Kirtland and return west as soon as he could do so, to facilitate which I advanced money to pay his pressing liabilities, and while he would go east we would start west with suitable outfit, accompanied by his wife, my father and younger sister, and he, coming by water, would meet us at Nauvoo, bringing from Cincinnati and St. Louis goods to start business in merchandise.

We left Kirtland the first of June 1842 and with the beautiful weather and good roads, we had hopes of a safe and pleasant journey. But our animals were young and spirited and we had need both to watch and pray, for we were often in great danger. An incident or two I will relate to show that the Angel promised was always near. Soon after our start, our horses still fresh and mettlesome, descended a long, steep and dangerous dugway, with my wife and sister in the wagon. Just at the bottom as I drew rein upon the level, the ring from the neck-yoke with the wagon tongue dropped to the ground. The thought of the certainty of deaths had it dropped a minute before, almost dazed me--but the Angel was there. Another day, on appearance of a storm we put up at a tavern. I drove the covered wagon in which my wife and self slept, under a large swinging signboard hung between heavy posts, my father and sisters finding rooms in the tavern while we occupied the wagon. In the terrible night storm lightning shattered posts and signboard, piling the debris upon the front of the wagon. Although for a time we felt ourselves killed, we were out all right in the morning, with the footprints of the same Angel clearly in view.

But with all past experience I had a lesson yet to learn. We were just over the Illinois line in the prairie country and it was the Sabbath. We had driven hard all the week and needed rest, yet our anxiety was so great to get to our friends that although we knew the Lord had said, "Thou shalt rest on the Sabbath," yet in our haste we did not do so, and driving until noon we crossed a deep creek, on the opposite bank of which was an open space of beautiful grass, surrounded by timber and high brush. Our teams were tired, and heretofore on the road had given no evidence that they were easily frightened or disposed to run away. So driving into the tall grass I slipped off their bridles, as I had often done before. But no sooner had I done so than they began to show signs of fright, and commenced to plunge and start to run. My father was just doing the same

with his buggy horse, and my sisters stood holding the span attached to the family carriage. I did all possible to quiet my team but they broke away. My father's did the same; the others broke from the women, and all went tearing through the timber and brush until every vehicle was smashed and with goods and harness strung piece-meal for three-fourths of a mile around. A greater smash up it was never my bad luck to see. At first I looked upon the wreck as impossible to reconstruct, but we gathered up and put the parts together and got all mechanical help possible, labored hard, and by the next Sabbath day we had so far reconstructed our vehicles that by noon we hitched up, and feeling again tempted through anxiety we drove fifteen miles to early camp, but when unhitching our horses they again--all but one--took fright, took the back track, and as though spurred by the Evil One ran the whole distance to our former camp. Upon the horse left I followed with utmost speed and found them with legs terribly lacerated by the tug chains, and streaming with blood and sweat. I made no stop, but hurried them back as fast as I could ride, arriving in camp just before sunset, and was up much of the night bathing the bruised legs of the animals, and telling the Lord if He would now forgive me and give us His blessing for the rest of our journey I would promise never to forget the experience of those two Sabbath days.

We started early the next morning, and with all the fatigue and bruises, our animals seemed all right, and made us no trouble afterwards. I knew then and I know now that this experience was given to me of the Lord for my profit, and to record as a testimony to my children, that the Lord will not hold in favor those who do not rest upon and hallow the Sabbath day.

We arrived at Ramus, afterwards Macedonia, twenty miles east of Nauvoo, first of July, where lived my mother with younger children, my

brother, Joel H., and family, and brother, Joseph E., who had married in my absence, and my younger sister, Mary E., who had married George Wilson.

There had come another bereavement, another wave of sorrow for us all as a family. Our youngest brother, Amos P., who had always been delicate and had suffered from sciatic rheumatism through nearly the whole period of my absence, had died but a few weeks previous to my return. He was bright and most lovable, and being the youngest was the darling of my poor mother whose loving heart had so often been made to bow to the sorrows of bereavement. He was born January 15, 1829, and died May 9, 1842, in his fourteenth year.

My return after an absence of two and a half years of such varied experience, was a time of glad greeting for all. I had left home when but a boy in experience, the uneducated one--starting while sick and without money; and truly, that promised Angel had been with me, to preserve my life and to open the way for my return in health, not now alone, for a loved and loving wife accompanied me. I was not now so poor, and I felt truly the Lord had given me more than I had earned and repaid all my sacrifices.

I soon visited Nauvoo, and I saw the Prophet, who cordially welcomed my return with renewed blessing. I conversed with him upon the business matters between him and Brother Babbitt, told him it had been a time of test to Brother Babbitt's integrity, but with his arm around him I felt he would remain true to the cause. He said he loved Brother Babbitt, that he was capable of great good, and that the troubles should all be bridged over, and Brother Babbitt should have no reason to complain. It was the first time I had ever spoken to the Prophet with feelings and

opinions of my own, and he seemed to love me more, because of my love for Brother Babbitt, and told me, that as Brother Babbitt arrived we should come together and see him, which we were able to do in a few days. We found Brother Joseph in a happy mood and glad to see Brother Babbitt. When business matters were brought forward relating to notes bought from outsiders against him or the Church, Brother Joseph said to him, "Now, Brother Almon, we will not disagree, for here is Brother Benjamin; you have all confidence in him and so have I; and now let us leave all our differences to him and stand by it, and be good friends forevermore," to which Brother Babbitt agreed.

All was settled at once, and all papers between them were placed in my hands, which then included the Church property in Kirtland, and the Prophet said then that he wished me to remain in Ramus, as it was then called, and act as trustee or agent for the Church property at that place, consisting of the then surveyed town plat and all the lands around the town site. He then made and executed to me a power of attorney to use his name in buying, selling, and deeding property, which power I held and acted upon fully until the day of his martyrdom. Brother Babbitt had bought a fine stock of merchandise with which to start business, and as the troubles at Kirtland had complicated him financially, and wishing to associate our business, by power of attorney all transactions were in my name. At this time Brigham Young, then President of the Twelve, wished to send me to Pittsburgh, to preside over and take charge of the branches of the Church in that region. But my business outlook at home was flattering, and I felt I should carefully look after the means that had come to me. So like the "young man" with the Savior, I was a little sorrowful, but secretly felt it was the road to real usefulness. But when I told Brother Joseph, he said, "Tell Brother Brigham that Brother Joseph says, `send

someone else.'" But I always felt that he discerned my choice and decided accordingly.

I was now selling goods, keeping a tavern, and doing all the Church business for that town, which was second only to Nauvoo, and I was growing not a little into the idea of getting rich. Yet I did not forget that I was an elder, and not only took part in our meetings at home, but as often as I found opportunity I would preach in the surrounding country to the outside community. The Prophet often came to our town, but after my arrival, he lodged in no house but mine, and I was proud of his partiality and took great delight in his society and friendship. When with us, there was no lack of amusement; for with jokes, games, etc., he was always ready to provoke merriment, one phase of which was matching couplets in rhyme, by which we were at times in rivalry; and his fraternal feeling, in great degree did away with the disparity of age or greatness of his calling.

I can now see, as President George A. Smith afterwards said, that I was then really "the bosom friend and companion of the Prophet Joseph." I was as welcome at the Mansion as at my own house, and on one occasion when at a full table of his family and chosen friends, he placed me at his right hand and introduced me as his "friend, Brother B. F. Johnson, at whose house he sat at a better table than his own." Sometimes when at my house I asked him questions relating to past, present and future; some of his answers were taken by Brother William Clayton, who was then present with him, and are now recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants; the one as to what the Lord told him in relation to seeing his face at 85 years of age; also the one as to the earth becoming as a sea of glass, molten with fire. [D&C 130: 9, 14-17] Other questions were asked when Brother Clayton was not present, one of which I will relate: I asked where

the nine and a half tribes of Israel were. "Well," said he, "you remember the old caldron or potash kettle you used to boil maple sap in for sugar, don't you?" I said yes. "Well," said he, "they are in the north pole in a concave just the shape of that kettle. And John the Revelator is with them, preparing them for their return." Many other things of a public or private nature I might here record, but will only note one or two, those pertaining to our own family.

In Macedonia the Johnsons were quite numerous and influential and the envious dubbed us the "Royal Family." When Joseph heard of this honor conferred upon us by our neighbors, he said the name was and should be a reality; that we were a royal family; and he knowing the intemperance of my father, said that he should yet be a great man and stand at the head of kingdom. On one occasion he blessed my mother and told her that not one of all her children should ever leave the Church; which, up to this, the year 1894, has been the case; and now as a family we number not less than one thousand, not one of the kindred by blood has ever yet apostatized that I know of.

In talking with my mother after the revelation [D&C 132] on plural marriage was given, he told her that when the Lord required him to move in plural marriage, that his first thought was to come and ask her for some of her daughters; and I can now understand that the period alluded to was at Kirtland, where she had three unmarried daughters at home, two of whom died there, and Almira, the other, was sealed to him in Nauvoo; the other two, Nancy M. and Susan E., being sealed to him by proxy since his death.

As I have alluded to the law of plural marriage [D&C 132] I will relate the time and manner in which it was taught to me.

About the first of April, 1843, the Prophet with some of the Twelve and others came to Macedonia to hold a meeting, which was to convene in a large cabinet shop owned by Brother Joseph E. and myself, and as usual he put up at my house. Early on Sunday morning he said, "Come Brother Bennie, let us have a walk." I took his arm and he led the way into a by-place in the edge of the woods surrounded by tall brush and trees. Here, as we sat down upon a log he began to tell me that the Lord had revealed to him that plural or patriarchal marriage was according to His law; and that the Lord had not only revealed it to him but had commanded him to obey it; that he was required to take other wives; and that he wanted my Sister Almira for one of them, and wished me to see and talk to her upon the subject. If a thunderbolt had fallen at my feet I could hardly have been more shocked or amazed. He saw the struggle in my mind and went on to explain. But the shock was too great for me to comprehend anything, and in almost an agony of feeling I looked him squarely in the eye, and said, while my heart gushed up before him, "Brother Joseph, this is all new to me; it may all be true--you know, but I do not. To my education it is all wrong, but I am going, with the help of the Lord to do just what you say, with this promise to you--that if ever I know you do this to degrade my sister I will kill you, as the Lord lives." He looked at me, oh, so calmly, and said, "Brother Benjamin, you will never see that day, but you shall see the day you will know it is true, and you will fulfill the law and greatly rejoice in it." And he said, "At this morning's meeting, I will preach you a sermon that no one but you will understand. And furthermore, I will promise you that when you open your mouth to your sister, it shall be filled."

At the meeting he read the parable of the Talents, and showed plainly that to him that hath shall be given more, and from him that had but one should be taken that he seemed to have, and given to him who had ten.

This, so far as I could understand, might relate to families, but to me there was a horror in the idea of speaking to my sister upon such a subject, the thought of which made me sick. But I had promised, and it must be done. I did not remember his words, and have faith that light would come, I only thought, "How dark it all looks to me." But I must do it, and so told my sister I wished to see her in a room by herself, where I soon found her seated. I stood before her trembling, my knees shaking, but I opened my mouth and my heart opened to the light of the Lord, my tongue was loosened and I was filled with the Holy Ghost. I preached a sermon that forever converted me and her also to the principle, even though her heart was not yet won by the Prophet. And so I had great joy after my tribulation.

He had asked me to bring my sister to the city, which I soon did, where he saw her at my sister's, the Widow Sherman, who had already been sealed to him by proxy. His brother, Hyrum, said to me, "Now, Brother Benjamin, you know that Brother Joseph would not sanction this if it was not from the Lord. The Lord revealed this to Brother Joseph long ago, and he put it off until the Angel of the Lord came to him with a drawn sword and told him that he would be slain if he did not go forth and fulfill the law." He told my sister to have no fears, and he there and then sealed my sister, Almira, to the Prophet.

Soon after this he was at my house again, where he occupied my Sister Almira's room and bed, and also asked me for my youngest sister, Esther M. I told him she was promised in marriage to my wife's brother. He said, "Well, let them marry, for it will all come right."

The orphan girl--Mary Ann Hale--that my mother had raised from a child, was now living with us, of nearly the same age as my sister, and I

asked him if he would not like her, as well as Almira. He said, "No, but she is for you. You keep her and take her for your wife and you will be blessed." This seemed like hurrying up my blessings pretty fast, but the spirit of it came upon me, and from that hour I thought of her as a wife that the Lord had given me.

In lighting him to bed one night he showed me his garments and explained that they were such as the Lord made for Adam from skins, and gave me such ideas pertaining to endowments as he thought proper. He told me Freemasonry, as at present, was the apostate endowments, as sectarian religion was the apostate religion.

In the evening he called me and my wife to come and sit down, for he wished to marry us according to the Law of the Lord. I thought it a joke, and said I should not marry my wife again, unless she courted me, for I did it all the first time. He chided my levity, told me he was in earnest, and so it proved, for we stood up and were sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

This occurrence is referred to in the life of Joseph Smith as "Spending the evening in giving counsel to Brother Johnson and wife." At this time I knew that the Prophet had as his wives, Louisa Beeman, Eliza R. Snow, Maria and Sarah Lawrence, Sisters Lyon and Dibble, one or two of Bishop Partridge's daughters, and some of C. P. Lott's daughters, together with my own two sisters. And I also knew that Brother J. Bates Noble and others had plural wives, and that the Prophet had sealed to me my first and had given to me a second to be my wife. And I knew of other things in the Prophet's life and teachings that I will not now write, but I do so well remember his declarations in the meetings of the Saints, that the Lord

had revealed to him principles, that should he teach and practice them, those who were now his best friends would become his bitterest enemies.

This was already becoming apparent, and the end of his labors in this life, with the hope of the rest prepared for the faithful was now beginning to fill his weary soul. On one occasion, at Macedonia, after he had preached to a large congregation through the day, and at evening meeting had blessed nineteen children, he said to me, "Let us go home." We went home, and I found my wife sitting with our first born still unblessed and said, "See now what we have lost by our babe not being at meeting. Brother Joseph replied, "You shall lose nothing, for I will bless him too," which he did, and then sitting back heavily in a big chair before the fire, and with a deep-drawn breath said, "Oh! I am so tired--so tired that I often feel to long for my day of rest. For what has there been in this life but tribulation for me? From a boy I have been persecuted by my enemies, and now even my friends are beginning to join with them, to hate and persecute me! Why should I not wish for my time of rest?"

His words to me were ominous, and they brought a shadow as of death over my spirit, and I said, "Oh, Joseph! how could you think of leaving us? How as a people could we do without you?" He saw my feelings were sorrowful and said kindly, "Bennie, if I was on the other side of the veil I could do many times more for my friends than I can do while I am with them here." But the iron had gone into my soul, and I felt that in his words there was a meaning that boded sorrow, and I could not forget them.

In the spring of 1843 I had commenced to erect a large brick residence, and when my sister came to be his wife, since she lived with us, he wished to become part owner for her, and so it was arranged, that I should draw

on him for his share, or use proceeds of sales of Church property, all of which, though only verbal, was mutual between us.

Apostate spirits within were now joining with our enemies outside for the destruction of the priesthood, for the Temple was progressing, and the devil, striving for empire began to stir up, in them as in Judas, desire for the Prophet's blood. The keys of endowments and plural marriage had been given, and some had received their Second Anointing. Baptism for the dead had been taught and the keys committed. All of these things I then comprehended, though in some I had not fully participated. These sacred principles were then committed to but a few, but not only were they committed to me from the first, but from the first I was authorized by the Prophet to teach them to others, when I was led to do so.

I was now progressing with my building, and had over 100,000 bricks in its walls, besides cut stone. I was still selling goods, with a cabinet shop, was burning brick and lime, and attending to my calling as trustee, when traitors inside joined with outside enemies to destroy the Prophet. All of this is written in church history, so I need not repeat.

At this time Father John Smith lived at and was President at Macedonia, and by him I was ordained to the high priesthood. When he was sent for by the Prophet to receive the Patriarchal Priesthood, I accompanied him to Nauvoo for that purpose, and obtained indirectly his first blessing. My mother having finally separated from my father, by the suggestion or counsel of the Prophet, she accepted of and was sealed by him to Father John Smith. In this I felt not a little sorrow, for I loved my father and knew him to be naturally a kind and loving parent, a just and noble spirited man. But he had not obeyed the Gospel, had fought it with his words; and as I knew a stream must have a fountain and does not rise

above it, so I consoled myself, assured by the Prophet's words that a better day would come to my father.

The days of tribulation were now fast approaching, for just as the Prophet so often told us, so it came to pass; and those he had called around him as a cordon of safety and strength were worse than a rope of sand, and were now forging his fetters. William Law was his first counselor; Wilson Law, Major General of the Legion; Wm. Marks, President of the Stake; the Higbies, his confidential attorneys, and Dr. Foster, his financial business agent. All of these and many others entered into secret covenant so much worse than Judas, that they would have the Prophet's life, just in fulfillment of what he had said so often publicly. With all their power, they began to make a party strong enough to destroy the Prophet.

At one of the meetings in the presence of the Quorum of the Twelve and others who were encircled around him, he arose, gave a review of his life and sufferings, and of the testimonies he had borne, and said that the Lord had now accepted his labors and sacrifices, and did not require him longer to carry the responsibilities and burden and bearing of this kingdom. Turning to those around him, including the twelve, he said, "And in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I now place it upon my brethren of this council, and I shake my skirts clear of all responsibility from this time forth," springing from the floor and shaking his skirt at the same time. At this same meeting he related a dream of a night or two previous. He said he thought the Laws, the Higbies, Fosters and others had bound him and cast him into a deep well, and while there he heard terrible cries of anguish and loud calls for him. With his arms pinioned he worked his way by his elbows so he could look over the top, and saw all who had bound him with a terrible serpent just ready to devour them. He told

them in his dream he gladly would help them, but they had bound him and he was powerless now to help them; and in his presence they were devoured by the serpent.

These things with those previous, impressed me strongly with a feeling that some great change was near. In fact, the Prophet was often heard to speak of his being made a sacrifice by those who had been his friends. But this is my own life in review and not the Prophet's, yet at this time I was so fully occupied by and with him, and my business and feelings so joined to his, that I have little more than his history to write while he lived, to fully chronicle my own.

Chapter SEVEN DARK DAYS

The full break had now come in Nauvoo. The apostates had started to publish the "Nauvoo Expositor" which was destroyed by the police, and Joseph, being Mayor of the city, was held responsible for the act. Writs were issued from Carthage for the arrest of the Prophet and others at Nauvoo, from which he was released by habeas corpus by local legal authority. All hell now seemed in commotion. Mobs were rising in all the adjacent counties, with Missouri and Iowa in sympathy with our enemies. All conspired for the destruction of the Prophet, with his beautiful city and massive temple so fast nearing completion.

Before this, the Prophet had foreshadowed the close of his own earthly mission, and the near approach of the time when the Saints in tribulation would find a place of refuge in the far-off vales of the Rocky Mountains, which has already taken place; and also relating still to the future, when a path will be opened for the Saints through Mexico, South America, and to the center Stake of Zion.

These, and many more great things were given by him, some of which, as with the ancient disciples, we could not comprehend until fulfilled.

It was now June 1844, and mobs were destroying property, burning homes of the Saints outside of Nauvoo, and threatening the city. Governor Ford ordered out troops to enforce the law, but they were not reliable, and all was excitement. On the 15th an order came for the able-bodied men at Macedonia to hasten to Nauvoo. On the 16th we started, and to avoid attack travelled all night across the prairie through mud, rain and darkness, terrible to those who were there. The Prophet came out to greet us. Here I remained a few days on duty, when I was sent by General

Dunham, then in command, back to Macedonia to look after and keep up a home guard.

It was now revealed to the Prophet that his only safety was in flight to the Rocky Mountains, and he crossed the river with a few faithful friends with a full purpose not to return. But through the persuasion and reproaches of his wife, Emma, and others, he was induced to return and give himself up to the slaughter. With all the persons who induced him to return I was well acquainted, and I know that fearful has been the hand of the Lord to follow them from the day they sought to steady the Ark of God, which resulted in the martyrdom of his servants.

After returning to Macedonia I saw no more of Brothers Joseph and Hyrum, but learned early on June 28th of their assassination. To attempt to delineate the feelings of woe and unutterable sorrow that swelled every heart too full for tears, I need not attempt. I stood up, dazed with grief, could groan but could not weep. The fountain of tears was dry! "Oh God! what will thy orphan church and people now do!" was the only feeling or thought, that now burst out in groans.

I did not go to see their mutilated bodies. I had no wish to look into their grave; I knew they were not there, and the words of Brother Joseph began to come back to me, "I could do so much more for my friends if I were on the other side of the veil." These words, "my friends"--oh, how glad that he was my friend. These thoughts gradually gained the empire in my heart, and I began to realize that in his martyrdom there was a great eternal purpose in the heavens. But we were not able, as yet, to comprehend such a necessity. I could begin now to feel just what he meant, and his words, "do for his friends," to me, were like the promise of Jesus to provide mansions for his disciples that they might be with him

always. These things now were my consolation, and when I could begin to rejoice in them, the fountains of my tears began to flow, and I grew in consolation from day to day.

Our enemies, who, on accomplishing the murder fled in fear of Mormon vengeance, now began to return in boldness, and a mob came and searched my new building for arms, and to take me on a writ, as they had obtained evidence that I was a refugee from Missouri justice and was one of the incendiaries in Daviess County. For days I was hidden in the woods, where trusted friends brought me food and at times bore me company. By degrees the excitement and feeling for persecution seemed allayed, and we again had hope for a brief period of peace. But I had no confidence now in anything here as a future home, and there was a great financial depression in all kinds of business. I was broken up in Macedonia, and my home, though enclosed, was unfinished, although material was ready for its completion; but I had neither energy nor faith enough to invest in it another dollar.

On November 14th Mary Ann Hale, given to me by the Prophet, was sealed to me as a plural wife by Father John Smith, as directed by President Brigham Young. But previous to this had transpired things I should not omit to relate.

At the time of the martyrdom all the Quorum of the Twelve were absent except John Taylor and Dr. Richards, both of whom were with the Prophet in the Carthage jail, and Sidney Rigdon having retained a partial fellowship as one of Joseph's counselors, came forward claiming the right of Guardian of the Church. James J. Strang also claimed through a spurious revelation purporting to be through the Prophet that he should lead the Church. And so matters stood until the return of the Twelve, when a

conference was assembled, and President Rigdon was called upon to put forth his claim before the people, which he did, and after closing his remarks, which were void of all power or influence, President Brigham Young arose and spoke. I saw him arise, but as soon as he spoke I jumped upon my feet, for in every possible degree it was Joseph's voice, and his person, in look, attitude, dress and appearance was Joseph himself, personified; and I knew in a moment the spirit and mantle of Joseph was upon him. Then I remembered his saying to the Council of which Sidney Rigdon was never a member, and I knew for myself who was now the leader of Israel. New confidence and joy continued to spring up within me, and the subject of our finding a new home in the wilderness of the great West was one that occupied much of my thoughts.

The cruel death of the Prophet now brought a new feeling and spirit over my father. Instead of joy in his death, he greatly sorrowed that he had ever been his enemy; he deplored his death and cursed bitterly his murderers, and would gladly have assisted in bringing them to justice, and this feeling never again left him.

Now came upon us another family bereavement, June 11, 1845. My sister, Mary, just younger than myself, and my companion (married to Brother George Wilson while on my mission), had died at childbirth with her second infant. She dropped away before we could reach her, to receive her last adieus. But she, like the others, died in full assurance of the reward for the pure in heart of womankind. None could approach nearer to angelic character, in childhood, girlhood or womanhood, nor was there ever known from her associates one unkind word or feeling towards her, and she died as she had lived, beloved by all who knew her.

The great idea now was to finish the Temple to the acceptance of the Lord, and prepare for the great move that the Saints now contemplated.

I was now called by the Council to rent and keep open the Nauvoo Mansion, late home of the Prophet, and commenced arrangements to leave Macedonia, feeling I should never return there for a home.

I was still indebted in St. Louis for goods to the amount of \$250 for which I was now being pressed, and to settle which, I gave a deed for my new brick building, with all needed material for completion that had cost me even thousands, together with seven city lots lying together on which it stood--all for that paltry sum, and then turned everything available in to pay rent and furnishings for the Mansion, to keep the Prophet's hotel to the credit of his name and his people.

From a broad and prosperous business and good circumstances, I was now only a renter, with everything available invested in the furnishing and supplying of a public house, while trouble was again beginning to rise. The Temple was drawing near to completion. The devil was mad, and his servants had already begun driving the Saints in from the adjacent sections. I was now appointed one of the Captains of Fifty to organize a company to prepare cooperatively for a journey to the west, by constructing wagons, procuring teams, tents and general outfit. Public travel was now cut off and all business profits with it; yet our expenses were nearly the same, as the place must be kept open to receive county and state officials; as also people who came to inquire into the causes of our troubles.

Among these were Judge Stephen A. Douglas, James Arlington Bennett of New York, and others, together with military officers sent by the

Governor from time to time. So, instead of being profitable we were at great expense with small returns.

I organized an emigration company and started wagon making in the basement story of the large brick stable belonging to the Mansion, and our hands were at work, but some of them had an eye more to their own than to the company's profit, which brought trouble and loss to me. The Temple was now open for endowments and sealings, and about December 1, 1845, a third wife, Miss Clarinda Gleason, was sealed to me.

Here my real family troubles commenced. The third wife was much older than the second, and was of broad experience and capability. She was unwilling to be second to the younger, and was not satisfied with her proper place, and there was now discord in the family circle.

Rumors of murders were rife. Jacob Backenstos, a man of sterling integrity for law and order, was sheriff, and boarded at the Mansion. By him or some of his posse, Frank Worrel, one of the mob leaders, was killed, and it was said others were found dead and it was reported that murders were committed at the Mansion stables--a suspicion prompted no doubt by our cooperative mechanics and laborers at work in and around its basement, then occupied as a wagon shop.

The mob spirit still prevailing, a posse was ordered from Carthage under military escort to explore the Mansion barn and stables for bodies of the dead, said to have been buried by the Mormons. They were soon convinced of the folly of their mission.

I now had three wives and three children, and all means left from the Macedonia sacrifice had been expended in rent, furnishings, supplies and

needed helps to keep the Mansion to its status of respectability. The time was drawing near when the Presidency would cross the river, and for me there would be no safety should I remain. President Young asked my condition and I told him all. He said I must go, and told Brother Hyrum Bostwick, one of my company, a man of means, to help me to an outfit. But his means were his own, and the outfit came too slow to get in sight. We were now invited to come to the Temple for our second anointing, but having the historic Gen. Arlington Bennett as the city's guest, with his associates to entertain, we were obliged to forego at that time the great privilege and blessing.

I was appointed with Bishop N. K. Whitney to visit Sister Emma for the last time, and if possible persuade her to remain with the Church. Nearly all night we labored with her, and all we could learn was that she was willing to go with the Church on condition she could be the leading Spirit. So we left her, and she did lead all who would follow her so long as she lived.

Letter to George S. Gibbs, 1903, Church Archives

Source: Benjamin F. Johnson, Letter to George S. Gibbs, 1903, cited in E. Dale LeBaron, "Benjamin Franklin Johnson: Colonizer, Public Servant, and Church Leader" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1967), pp. 325-46.

Dear Brother:

In resuming my answer to your scholarly and effusive epistle, I feel in every degree incompetent to the task. Especially do I feel the want of learning, and my writings, of course, must betray to you my poverty in classical education. Through childhood and early youth, my advantages, even for primary education, were the most meager. At seventeen, I

attended the winter term of the grammar school taught by William E. McLellin, in Kirtland, and presided over by the Prophet; at the same time attending night lectures in geography. These were my greatest opportunities for schooling, and in them was finished my school education; and if I have acquired in life anything further of worth, it has been as snatched from the wayside while on the run as a missionary, pioneer or while in Nature's great laboratory with the axe, plow, spade or garden implements. I have been hard at work to provide sustenance for that flock which the Father has sent to my special care. And while it may be a degree common, even with the youth of Zion, whose advantages so far surpass their parents', to look upon the aged as "black numbers," "old fossils," or "mossbacks" , yet not one whit of that spirit do I feel in your letter, and my heart goes out toward you in love and blessing, as though you were indeed one of my own sons. And I most earnestly pray that the Lord will so inspire my thoughts and so awaken a remembrance of the past, that I may be able to write to you as by the voice of the spirit of my calling in the Priesthood of the fathers, of anything pertaining to the gospel principle or of our historic past, that may better equip you for that sphere of greater callings and responsibilities that await you as a son in Zion, in the lineage of Ephraim, and of the seed of the blessed.

Yours thoughts in regard to the need of positive keys for interpreting our true position, condition and relation to the gospel, both in the past and for the future, strictly accord with my own, and to me it simply means that the spark of life or of light, brought with us at birth, through a cumulative experience, has attained its present status in intellectual and physical power.

In infancy we were fed upon milk, and in childhood by a loving hand, while our mistakes were tenderly admonished. As we became older we

began to grasp the principles and issues of physical life and the modes for its sustenance through labors of our hands; while the gospel, as an alphabet, with its possibilities of reaching every principle of truth and light within the great science of eternal lives, is given to us as spiritual or intellectual food, through which, by faith, we can forever grow in the knowledge and power of the Gods, to become in reality and fullness even the "Sons of God," with glory, exaltation, dominion and eternal progression, through the procreation of endless lives.

And to how much of this greatness in knowledge and power have we yet attained? As well may little children in making their mud pottery claim perfection as sculptors, as for us to claim a fullness in the knowledge of Gospel principles, precepts, or powers.

When were we, as a people, ever able fully to live by the law given to us of the Lord? In 1831 and '32' we were tried in Missouri with the Law of consecration, in which we failed; in '33' we were given, in Kirtland, the Order of Enoch and the Word of Wisdom. The Order of Enoch was not fully honored, and after seventy years experience in accumulating wisdom many are not yet wise. While through His mercy, the Lord in '36, gave us, when under His rod, the Law of Tithing in place of the former law, but how have we, as a people, fulfilled it? And again, when in '43' he gave us, by command the high and holy law of Plural Marriage, with the sealing power of the Holy Priesthood, did we, as a people, receive it in the spirit and purpose for which it was given? Or have we been slow in comprehending even the primary lessons and precepts of this life's mission?

And as for even our leaders being always filled with the light of their calling, to see the "end from the beginning," or always to discern correctly

the thoughts and purposes of others, has not been, according to my experience or knowledge. Does not the Lord tell us in D&C 130, that the Holy Ghost may descend upon a man and not always remain with him? And do we not all, at times, feel that to be a reality, as did the Master, when through mental anguish He "sweat blood at every pore", as also when upon the cross He cried out in agony of soul to His Father to know why He was forsaken? And to show a change of mood, even in our great Head, witness Him entwining a rope and in anger scourging out merchants and money changers from the temple and kicking over their tables, and in a gush of resentment toward those who hated Him he cries out: "Oh you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye do!" calling them "garnish sepulchres, full of dead men's bones", "robbers of widows and orphans, and oppressors of the poor"; and as though He would have them fight for the kingdom He had sent them to preach, He told those who had not swords "to sell their coats and buy one". But oh! how changed in feeling, when He, on the cross, could realize the enormity of their guilt and the greater sufferings consequent to them, and then with heart melted in pity for His murderers and those that hated Him, He cried to His Father with entreaty that they be forgiven.

And just such phases, to a degree, have I witnessed in the life and character of our great Prophet, who stood in the presence of both the Father and the Son and personally conversed with them both; being often visited by Holy Angels, while continually receiving by revelation the word of the Lord to His people. And yet he was altogether of "like passions with his brethren and associates."

"As a son, he was nobility itself, in love and honor of his parents; as a brother he was loving and true, even unto death; as a husband and father,

his devotion to wives and children stopped only at idolatry. And his life's greatest motto after 'God and His Kingdom' was that of 'wives, children and friends'. And on one Sunday morning while sitting with him in the Mansion dining room in private converse, two of Emma's children came to him, as just from their mother, all so nice, bright and sweet, and calling to them my attention, he said, "Benjamin, look at these children, how could I help loving their mother; if necessary, I would go to hell for such a woman." And although at the time he had in the Mansion other wives, younger and apparently more brilliant, yet Emma, the wife of his youth, to me, appeared the queen of his heart and of his home.

But to return: Joseph the Prophet, as a friend he was faithful, long suffering, noble and true to the degree that the erring who did love him were at times reminded that the rod of a friend was better than the kiss of an enemy, "while others who sopped in his dish" but bore not reproof, became his enemies, and like Laws, Marks, Foster, Higby and others--who hated him and conspired to his death.

As a companion, socially, he was highly endowed; was kind, generous, mirth loving, and at times, even convivial. He was partial to a well supplied table and he did not always refuse the wine that "maketh glad the heart". For amusement, he would sometimes wrestle with a friend, or oftener would test strength with others by sitting on the floor with feet together and stick grasped between them, but he never found his match. Jokes, rebuses, matching couplets in rhymes, etc., were not uncommon. But to call for the singing of one or more of his favorite songs was more frequent. Of those, "Wife, Children and Friends", "Battle of River Russen", "Soldiers' Tear", "Soldier's Dream" and "Last Rose of Summer", were most common. And yet, although so social and even convivial at times, he would allow no arrogance or undue liberties, and criticism, even by his

associates, was rarely acceptable, and contradiction would rouse in him the lion at once, for by no one of his fellows would he be superseded or disputed and in the early days at Kirtland, and elsewhere one or more of his associates were more than once, for their impudence, helped from the congregation by his (Joseph's) foot, and at one time at a meeting at Kirtland, for insolence to him, he soundly thrashed his brother William who boasted himself as invincible. And while with him in such fraternal, social and sometimes convivial moods, we could not then so fully realize the greatness and majesty of his calling, which, since his martyrdom, has continued to magnify in our lives, as the glories of this last dispensation more fully unfold to our comprehension.

One small incident, among the many, I will relate to show his playful, familiar, kind and loving nature toward one who to him was as a protege or a younger brother. Soon after the Prophet's escape from Missouri and arrival at Old "Commerce," the future Nauvoo, in 1839, I was with him. The people had flocked in from the terrible exposures of the past and nearly every one was sick with intermittent or other fevers, of which many died. In this time of great sickness, poverty and death, the Prophet called his brother, Don Carlos, and cousin, G. A. Smith, as missionaries to administer to and comfort the people. And there being there two young Botanic medical students Doctors Wiley and Pendleton, he called them to prescribe medicine, and called me to follow and take general oversight and care of all the sick, which for weeks, I did, without even one night of respite for sleep. The forepart of September, Dr. Wiley became sick unto death, which soon occurred, after which the Prophet too had a violent attack of the prevailing sickness. And as Emma was in no degree able to care for him, it wholly developed upon me, and both day and night, through a period of little less than two weeks I was hardly absent from his room; as almost his only food was gruel, and about the only treatment

he would accept was a flush of the colon with warm water perhaps tintured slightly with capsicum and myrrh, or a little soda and salt, both of which were prepared and administered by me in the room he occupied; and if any sleep came to me it was while lying upon his bed or sitting in my chair. At the termination of this sickness and fasting, he arose from his bed like a lion, or as a giant refreshed with wine. He went to President Rigdon with great reproof, commanding him and his house to repent; and called for a skiff, crossed the river, and finding Elijah Fordham in death's struggle, he commanded him to arise, which he did at once, and was made whole as also were others by his administrations.

But I am writing at too great length. Soon after the Prophet's recovery I too came apparently nigh unto death through a violent attack of the fever, through which my comfort was kindly looked after by the Prophet.

About the middle of October a letter came to say that my dear mother and young sister were apparently near to death, in Springfield Illinois, and were anxious for my return. And in my anxiety again to see my mother, I procured quinine, which was just becoming known as an antidote for fevers and taking it in large doses, my fever soon abated, and under it's tonic influence I fancied I had become well, and in great kindred at Springfield. My horse was in the yard ready to mount, but I wished to take leave of the Prophet, with the hope again to receive his blessing. Of the whole sum I had obtained with which to pay for an outfit and passage to England, with the twelve, when they should start, to which I had been called by the June Conference at Quincy, "I had but one ten dollar bill, I said, "As this is all I have left, I went to pay a tithe of it." He saw I was weak in body and that my heart was sad in leaving him, so thinking to cheer and arouse me, when putting the nine silver dollars in my hand he playfully knocked my hand upward, and scattering the money

all over the room. My heart was so full of tears, and my emotions must have vent, so forgetting all but the feeling that we were boy companions playing together, I sprang at and grappled him, as though to teach him a lesson, but the lesson was all to me, for on making one grand effort to throw him, I found myself in strength no more than a bulrush as compared with him, and as my strength was fictitious and my real recovery was but illusion, collapsed and fainted in his arms. He placed me in repose, and did all necessary for my restoration and comfort. Then gathering up the scattered money, and after a period of delay, weak, trembling and desolate, yet determined to start, I led my horse to the other gate and as I was passing through, with the bridle on my arm, his hand detained me, and placing his hands upon my head, he seemed to pour out his soul in blessing me. He told the Lord I had been faithful to care for others, that I was now worn and sick, and that on my journey I would need his care, and he asked that a special guardian might go with me from that day and stay with me through all my life. And oh! my dear brother, how often have I seen through life and footprints of that angel, and knew that his hand had drawn me back from death.

The day after leaving Nauvoo my fever returned with all of its virulence. The next day, near night, I was found by the Prophet's brother William, lying helpless by the roadside, and the next evening I was found by strangers, being unconscious in the road, who kindly cared for me until I could again get upon my horse to finish the journey to my mother in Springfield, where I soon arrived, and remained very sick until Apostles Young and Kimball came in January to find me apparently nigh unto death with hemorrhage of the bowels. At leaving, they told me to take a mission East so soon as able to start, which I did through kindness of Brother James Standing, who, upon my bed in a sleigh took me a hundred and ten miles to Paris, Illinois. Turning home on bare ground, he

left me in deep mud, alone, and near penniless, sick and among strangers, while borne to the earth by a burden of bashful ignorance-- the long green of young manhood; but my "Angel" was always with me to open the way.

Now you see how I have wandered from the subject of your "Three Keys," but you said you wanted to learn more of my history and personalities, so what I have written may serve as a glimpse of my earlier life.

Now, returning to the subject, shall I tell you that just the other day at Quarterly Conference one of our best missionary speakers was led to say that "our Gospel was revealed as a whole, and not fragmentary", and I felt to tell him that the Gospel had not only been given to us by fragments, but that of the great science of Eternal Lives, we have not yet received or learned more than it's alphabet; and perfection here can only exist in parts or degrees. And while the Holy Ghost may not always remain upon a man, may not even a prophet to whom it was not yet all revealed, make mistakes, as in the baptism for the dead, and also in the prophet sermon at the funerals of a child of Winzor Lyon and King Follett, when he preached that children, "even infants, would sit upon thrones with dominion," which was published in the "Times and Seasons" at the time, but which, like President Woodruff, I am positive he afterwards reconsidered. And those who were with him in Kirtland, Missouri and Nauvoo, will remember many things in which his sanguine and prophetic hopes seemed disappointed.

The Prophet Joseph laid the foundation of our Church in a military spirit, and as the Master taught His disciples, so he taught us to "sell our coat and buy swords", but never did the sword fully prevail with us, not

even with the Indians, and never before were we apparently so safe from them, or our outside enemies, as since the Lord, through the government, permitted us to be robbed of armed self protection; and even our mission martyrs have generally been murdered after a show of resistance. And are we not beginning to see that charity is the life and core of our religion? and that love is the great life spring and centrifugal power of the universe, and in our gospel there appears no place for hate or resentment,--not even towards those that would nail us to the cross.

Yet neither in Kirtland, Missouri or Nauvoo, did we fully comply with this rule, and even in Utah many were left to cherish toward our poor lamanite brethren, vindictiveness and hate; and in Missouri by Apostle Lyman Wight we were taught to "pray for our enemies," that God would damn them, and "give us power to kill them". And while "three witnesses" with his counsellors and many of the apostles with their president, as also many others of our leading men, had turned their "heel against the Prophet, how could he, in such disunion and enmity, always be strong in the might of his calling? And as the "eyes" of the Church, betrayed by those he loved who had so often "sopped with him" when there was little in the dish, under such disappointment and sorrow, may he not have been blinded even by his tears?

Jesus spent His life in teaching His disciples, and yet they did not understand Him or His doctrine. And although He spent a long period after His resurrection in teaching them of the "common salvation," and although His last word to them was a command to "baptize all nations" yet Peter, the chief Apostle, had not yet swallowed it; and the Lord had at last to choke it down him, through his vision upon the housetop. And even after that, Paul "withstood" his partiality for the old law.

And now of your third Key, I do not feel to say much, as I fear I am writing in too great profusion, and that what I have written you will deem as of little worth. But from my standpoint of view, I can see that we have been in evolution since from before the world was, and that we were never without our agency, and never will be, unless we become the sons of Perdition, and that through our voluntary doings, or our failing to do. We fore-ordained, or elected ourselves to just the condition in which we were placed on earth; and we are now, through our works of good or evil, ordaining ourselves to the good or evil that awaits us in the great future. And I see that only through darkness do we comprehend the light, and that by their opposite do we comprehend the attributes and exaltation of the Gods. And just as we know love and care for our little children and foresee effects to them from causes, and have a purpose beyond their comprehension for their good, just so our Father has a purpose in everything relating to our condition here, for we are not here by accident or mistake, and that "all things must work to the good of those who fear God" and evolve in the "upward and onward"; and so I will thus leave your third key.

And then you would have "further truths from the teachings of the Prophet". And where shall I commence? And how shall I write to your understanding even the little I may have retained in memory? You will not forget that the march in science through the last seventy years has in many things reversed the world's thought, changed its modes and almost its face, and is fast exploding the dogmas of outside theology. Well, the keys to all this knowledge were first committed to the Prophet Joseph, as a part of the gospel, for the world's benefit, for all of which he was derided. He was the first in this age to teach "substantialism", the eternity of matter, that no part or particle of the great universe could become annihilated or destroyed; that light and life and spirit were one; that all

light and heat are the "Glory of God", which is his power, that fills the "immensity of space", and is the life of all things, and permeates with latent life, and heat, every particle of which all worlds are composed; that light or spirit, and matter, are the two first great primary principles of the universe, or of Being; that they are self-existent, co-existent, indestructible, and eternal, and from these two elements both our spirits and our bodies were formulated, and he gave us to understand that there were twelve kingdoms, or planets, revolving around our solar system, to which the Lord gave an equal division of His time or ministry and that now was His time to again visit the earth. He taught that all systems of worlds were in revolution, the lesser around the greater. He taught that all the animal kingdoms would be resurrected, and made us understand that they would remain in the dominion of those who, with creative power, reach out for dominion, through the power of eternal lives. He taught us that the saints would fill the great West, and through Mexico, Central and South America we would do a great work for the redemption of the remnant of Jacob. Of what he taught us relating to the Kingdom of God, as it would become organized upon the earth through "all nations learning war no more", and all adopting the God-given constitution of the United States as a Palladium of Liberty and Equal Rights.

But this, of itself, would require a long chapter, which must wait until the fulfillment of a prediction by the Prophet, relating to a "Testimony that I should bear, after I had become hoary with age, of things which he that day taught to the circle of friends then around him," of whom I am the only one living. So here I will leave this subject for your further interrogations, and proceed to give you, so far as I can remember the Prophet Joseph's last charge to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

It was at Nauvoo early in 1844 in an assembly room, common to the meeting of the Council, or a select circle of the Prophet's most trusted friends, including all the Twelve, but not all the constituted authorities of the Church, for Presidents Rigdon, Law or Marks, the High Council nor Presidents of Quorums were not members of that council, which at times would exceed fifty in number. Its sittings were always strictly private, and all its rules were carefully and promptly observed and although its meetings were at times oftener than monthly and my home at Ramus over twenty miles distant, I was present at every session, and being about the youngest member of the council, I was deeply impressed with all that transpired, or was taught by the Prophet.

Criticism had already commenced by those near him in authority with regard to his teachings and his doing. And we began now, in a degree, to understand the meaning of what he had so often publicly said, that "should he teach and practice the principles that the Lord had revealed to him, and now requested of him, that those then nearest him in the stand would become his enemies and the first to seek his life"; which they soon did, just as he had foretold. And to show you that under conditions then existing that the Prophet did not really desire longer to live, and that you may see how my mind was in a degree prepared for after results, I will briefly relate an incident that occurred at his last visit to us at Ramus.

After he had at evening preached with great animation to a large congregation and had blessed nineteen children, he turned to me and said, "Benjamin, I am tired, let us go home", which only a block distant, we soon reached, and entering we found a warm fire with a large chair in front, and my wife sitting near with her babe, our eldest, upon her lap, and approaching her, I said, "Now, Melissa, see what we have lost by your not going to meeting, Brother Joseph has blessed all the children in the

place but ours, and it is left out in the cold." But the Prophet at once said, "You shall lose nothing", and he proceeded to bless our first born, and then, with a deep drawn breath as a sigh of weariness, he sank down heavily in his chair, and said, "Oh! I do get so tired and weary, that at times I almost yearn for my rest", and then proceeded briefly to recount to us some of the most stirring events of his life's labors, suffering and sacrifices, and then he said, "I am getting tired and would like to go to my rest." His words and tone thrilled and shocked me, and like an arrow pierced my hopes that he would long remain with us, and I said, as with a heart full of tears, "Oh! Joseph, what could we, as a people do without you? and what would become of the great Latter-day work if you should leave us?" He saw and was touched by my emotions, and in reply he said, "Benjamin, I should not be far away from you, and if on the other side of the veil I should still be working with you, and with a power greatly increased, to roll on this kingdom." And such was the tone, earnestness and pathos of his words to me then, that they can never be fully recalled but with emotion.

And now before fully returning to the council and subject in connection with the above, I will relate a dream told to us in council by the Prophet but a short time before his death, which was as follows: "I dreamed that by the Laws, Marks, Higby's and Fosters, I was bound; both hand and foot and cast into a deep well, soon after which I heard screams of terror and cries of 'Oh! Brother Joseph, save us, save us!' This cry continued until with my elbows and toes I had worked my way to the top, and looking out, I saw all of those who had bound me within the folds of a terrible serpent, that was preparing to swallow them, and I told them that as they had bound me, I could render them no assistance." This dream made upon my mind an impression never forgotten, and just as he related it, so

it was fulfilled in his death; for those were the men that opened the way for his assassination.

And now returning to the council and the "Last Charge." Let us remember that by revelation he had reorganized the Holy Priesthood, and by command of the Lord (D&C 124 and D&C 123) had taken from the First Presidency his brother Hyrum to hold as Patriarch, the sealing power, the first and highest honor due to priesthood; that he had turned the keys of endowments, to the last anointing, and sealing together with keys of Salvation for the dead, with the eternity of the marriage covenant and the power of endless lives. All these keys he held, and under these then existing conditions he stood before that association of his select friends, including all the Twelve, and with great feeling and animation he graphically reviewed his life of persecution, labor and sacrifice for the church and kingdom of God, both of which he declared were now organized upon the earth. The burden of which had become too great for him longer to carry, that he was weary and tired with the weight he so long had borne, and he then said, with great vehemence: "And in the name of the Lord, I now shake from my shoulders the responsibilities of bearing off the Kingdom of God to all the world, and here and now I place that responsibility, with all the keys, powers and privileges pertaining thereto, upon the shoulders of you the Twelve Apostles, in connection with this council; and if you will accept this, to do it, God shall bless you mightily and shall open your way; and if you do it I now shake my garments clear and free from the blood of this generation and of all men"; and shaking his skirt with great vehemence he raised himself from the floor, while the spirit that accompanied his words thrilled every heart as with a feeling that boded bereavement and sorrow.

And now, my dear brother, after 60 years have passed, at 85 in age, I bear to you and to all the world a solemn testimony of the truth and veracity of what I have written above, for although so many years have intervened, they are still in my mind, as fresh as when they occurred; no doubt as a part fulfillment of a prediction by the Prophet relating to "testimonies I should bear of his teachings, after I had become hoary with age."

There were, dear brother, other teachings to that council, of which I am not at full liberty to write, but if I had your ear, I would remember that the Prophet once said to me: "Benjamin, in regard to those things I have taught you privately, that are not yet for the public, I give you the right when you are so led, to commit them to others, for you will not be led wrong in discerning those worthy of your confidence."

And now to your question, "How early did the Prophet Joseph practice polygamy?" I hardly know how wisely to reply, for the truth at times may be better withheld; but as what I am writing is to be published only under strict scrutiny of the wisest, I will say, that the revelation [D&C 132] to the Church at Nauvoo, July 21, 1843, on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant and the Law of Plural Marriage, was not the first revelation of the law received and practiced by the Prophet. In 1835, at Kirtland, I learned from my sister's husband, Lyman R. Sherman, who was close to the Prophet, and received it from him, "that the ancient order of Plural Marriage was again to be practiced by the Church." This at the time, did not impress my mind deeply, although there then lived with his family a neighbor's daughter, Fannie Alger, a very nice and comely young woman about my own age, toward whom not only myself, but every one, seemed partial for the amiability of her character; and it was whispered even then that Joseph loved her. After this, there was some trouble with Jared

Carter, and through Brother Sherman I learned that "as he had built himself a new house, he now wanted another wife", which Joseph would not permit.

And then there was some trouble with Oliver Cowdery, and whisper said it was relating to a girl then living in his family; and I was afterwards told by Warren Parish, that he himself and Oliver Cowdery did know that Joseph had Fannie Alger as a wife, for they were spied upon and found together. And I can now see that as at Nauvoo, so at Kirtland, that the suspicion or knowledge of the Prophet's plural relation was one of the causes of apostasy and disruption at Kirtland although at the time there was little said publicly on the subject.

Soon after the Prophet's flight in winter of 1837 and 1838, the Alger family left for the West and stopping in Indiana for a time Fannie soon married to one of the citizens there, and although she never left the state, she did not turn from the Church nor from her friendship with the Prophet while she lived.

And now, looking back through the stirring adventures and incidents of thrilling experience of the four years that followed, from 1838 to 1843, such as accompanying the "Kirtland Poor Camp", and arriving in Missouri just in time to take in all the experience of that period, such as imprisonment in Wilson's camp with for many days--the Hauns Mill and McBride murderers as my guards, my wonderful escape and preservation, and my return the following summer to meet the Prophet at Nauvoo, with the terrible sickness that followed, both with others and myself; after which a two and a half year's mission to Canada and Middle States, all so full of change and thrilling incidents that all past experience of my life seemed as partly swallowed up or forgotten, but on meeting the

Prophet at my return to Nauvoo, in June, 1842, he greeted me with great warmth, and almost at once installed me as his legal agent, with the right to use his name as I might be led in business transactions, especially as related to the Church lands and town property of Ramus, all of which were placed by my charge.

And now, in visiting my sister, the widow of Lyman R. Sherman, who died a martyr to the conditions at Far West, I found with her a former acquaintance, Sister Louisa Beeman, and I saw from appearances that they were both in his care, and that he provided for their comfort; and as I was held closely to business, and my home at Ramus was twenty miles distant, I saw but little of them until after the Prophet, in early spring of 1843, had come to Ramus to teach me plural marriage, and to ask my other sisters to be his wives, an account of which I have heretofore given by sworn statement but will here repeat as it occurred.

It was Sunday morning, April 3rd or 4th, 1843, that the Prophet was at my home in Ramus, and after breakfast he proposed a stroll together, and taking his arm, our walk led toward a swail, surrounded by trees and tall brush and near the forest line not far from my house. Through the swail ran a small spring brook, across which a tree was fallen and was clean of its bark. On this we sat down and the Prophet proceeded at once to open to me the subject of plural and eternal marriage and he said that years ago in Kirtland the Lord had revealed to him the ancient order of plural marriage, and the necessity for its practice, and did command him then to take another wife, and that among his first thoughts was to come to my mother for some of her daughters. And as he was again required of the Lord to take more wives, he had come now to ask me for my sister Almira.

My words astonished me and almost took my breath. I sat for a time amazed and finally, almost ready to burst with emotion, I looked him straight in the face and said: "Brother Joseph, this is something I did not expect, and I do not understand it. You know whether it is right, I do not. I want to do just as you tell me, and I will try, but if I ever should know that you do this to dishonor and debauch my sister, I will kill you as sure as the Lord lives." And while his eyes did not move from mine, he said with a smile, in a soft tone: "But Benjamin you will never know that, but you will know the principle in time, and will greatly rejoice in what it will bring to you." "But how," I asked, "Can I teach my sister what I myself do not understand, or show her what I do not myself see?" "But you will see and understand it," he said, "And when you open your mouth to talk to your sister, light will come to you and your mouth will be full and your tongue loose, and I will today preach a sermon to you that none but you will understand." Both of these promises were more than fulfilled. The text of his sermon was our use of the "one, five and ten talents," and as God had now commanded plural marriage, and was exaltation and dominion of the saints depended upon the number of their righteous posterity, from him who was then but with one talent, it would be taken and given him that had ten, which item of doctrine seems now to be somewhat differently constructed.

But my thought and wish is to write of things just as they occurred, and I now bear an earnest testimony that his other prediction was more than fulfilled, for when with great hesitation and stammering I called my sister to a private audience, and stood before her shaking with fear, just so soon as I found power to open my mouth, it was filled, for the light of the Lord shone upon my understanding, and the subject that had seemed so dark now appeared of all subjects pertaining to our gospel the most lucid and plain; and so both my sister and myself were converted together, and

never again did I need evidence or argument to sustain that high and holy principle. And within a few days of this period my sister accompanied me to Nauvoo, where at our sister Delcena's, we soon met the Prophet with his brother Hyrum and Wm. Clayton, as his private secretary, who always accompanied him. Brother Hyrum at once took me in hand, apparently in fear I was not fully converted, and this was the manner of his talk to me: "Now Benjamin, you must not be afraid of this new doctrine, for it is all right. You know Brother Hyrum don't get carried away by worldly things, and he fought this principle until the Lord showed him it was true. I know that Joseph was commanded to take more wives, and he waited until an angel with a drawn sword stood before him and declared that if he longer delayed fulfilling that command he would slay him." This was the manner of Brother Hyrum's teaching to me, which I then did not need, as I was fully converted.

Meanwhile, the Prophet, with Louisa Beeman and my sister Delcena, had it agreeable arranged with Sister Almera, and after a little instruction she stood by the Prophet's side and was sealed to him as a wife, by Brother Clayton; after which the Prophet asked me to take my sister to occupy number "10" in his Mansion home during her stay in the city. But as I could not long be absent from my home and business, we soon returned to Ramus, where on the 15th of May, some three weeks later, the Prophet again came and at my house occupied the same room and bed with my sister, that the month previous he had occupied with the daughter of the late Bishop Partridge, as his wife.

And at this time he sealed to me my first wife for eternity, and gave to me my first plural wife, Mary Ann Hale, an orphan girl raised by my mother then living with us, who is still with me, and is probably the only wife still living with the man to whom she was given by the Prophet.

At the marriage of Sister Almera to the Prophet, there was still our youngest sister, for whom he manifest partiality, and would gladly have married, also, but she being young and partially promised to my first wife's brother, although reluctantly, the matter by him was dropped.

On learning from the Prophet that even in Kirtland "the Lord had required him to take plural wives, and that he had then thought to ask for some of my sister,s" the past with its conditions and influences began more fully to unfold to my mind, the causes that must, at least in part, have led to the great apostasy and disruption in Kirtland. Without a doubt in my mind, Fanny Alger was, at Kirtland, the Prophet's first plural wife, in which, by right of his calling, he was justified of the Lord (see D&C 132:59-60); while Oliver Cowdery, J. Carter, W. Parish, or others were not justified of the Lord either in their criticisms upon the doings of the Prophet, or in their becoming a "law unto themselves," through which they lost the light of their calling and were left in darkness.

Fanny A., when asked by her brother and others, even after the Prophet's death, regarding her relations to him, replied: "That is all a matter of our own, and I have nothing to communicate." Her parents died in Utah, true to the church. And to my knowledge, was by President Kimball in the temple at St. George introduced as "Brother of the Prophet Joseph's first plural wife."

The marriage of my eldest sister to the Prophet was before my return to Nauvoo, and it being tacitly admitted, I asked no questions.

And as to the number that came into the plural order, before the Prophet's death, I can think of but five, whose names I will not now

attempt to recall, but the number soon after his death began to increase. But on the finishing of the Temple, with endowments that followed, the number was greatly augmented. And so there was at least a "few who had accepted" and practiced plural marriage from about 1842 to 1852, when the revelation was published to the world.

"How generally was polygamy practiced in Utah?" is a question that I am not qualified to answer, but from my narrow observation, I would "guess" that one-tenth of our church men married plurally, and that two-thirds of that number made a fair success in raising good families, and that the other third was more or less a failure. But my judgment is not to be fully relied upon.

Of the number of plural marriages in Joseph's day, I have already said of men there was but few, comprising the Prophet and part of the twelve, with a few others who were his confidential or bosom friends.

You ask if plural marriage was ever Mandatory? If you mean by the Lord then I say yes; for it was by command to the Prophet from the first. But from the Prophet to the people, it came as counsel, which when personally given, was not always heeded. But no one who lived worthy of his priesthood and calling was deprived of a right to plural marriage. And just as it was a "happy privilege" for us in poverty and self-sacrifice to have our homes to preach the gospel, or to fill any calling in labors of love and charity for the salvation of the Father's children, thereby to learn their gratitude and love as our reward just so it was a privilege. For how do we attain to real happiness but in administering happiness to others?

The first command was to "multiply" and the Prophet taught us that dominion and power in the Great Future would be commensurate with

the number of "wives, children and friends" that we inherit here, and that our mission to the earth was to organize a nuclei of Heaven, to take with us, to the increase of which there would be no end.

And while I can believe that to some plural marriage was a great cross, yet I cannot say so from my own experience, for although in times that tried men's hearts, I married seven wives, I was, blessed with the gift to love them all; and although providing for so many was attended with great labor, care and anxiety, yet there was sympathy and love as my reward. And there is not one of my children of their mothers that are not dearer to me still than life.

On my return in 1855 from a mission to the Sandwich Isles, I found that Santaquin Utah, with the homes of my family and all that I possessed to the amount of thousands was destroyed or stolen, by Indians in the Walker War, and my family homeless. And yet in 1856, although conditions appeared forbidding, council suggested that I take other wives; and feeling sure it was the voice of the Lord to me, with promise of His blessing, so I married three more young wives, which was followed by cricket and locust raids to destroy nearly all our crops for five years, and yet we were neither hungry or naked. These were days that tried the souls of both men and women, and yet the love and gratitude of any one of my children today more than repays all, and I know that both men and women in plural marriage were happy in the assurance that they were obeying the command of God and the council of His servants.

And without the consent and approbation of him who held the keys of that priesthood, no one had the right even to speak upon the subject of plural marriage to the women he would marry, and even then, he ought first to obtain consent of her parents before having the right to speak to

her upon the subject. And this was ever the law so far as I understand it. And for all plural marriages or sealings there was the one only that held this right, which he, if necessary, could delegate to others.

And then with regard to a man's right to take a second wife without the knowledge and consent of the first, I will only say, if his first wife be like the Sarah of old, there would be no such necessity, but if other wives, then see D&C 132:64-65.

And now your question as to the cause of the early persecutions of the Saints. To answer this question, we should go back to its inception to find cause for the hate that is ever behind to incite persecution. Between the present and former dispensations there is a striking analogy. Jesus appeared to the learned, haughty, dignified and opulent Jews as the "poor illiterate carpenter's son of Nazareth", a despised "Galilean," who claimed to be the son of the Highest, the Great Jehovah, that "without him there was nothing made that was made," that he held "all power both in Heaven and on Earth," that he could "destroy the temple and rear it up in three days," etc. while the multitude turned from them to follow Him the "lowly Nazarene," hence their envy and jealousy which ripened into hate and in their nailing Him as a malefactor to the cross, and just so it has been in our day.

Joseph Smith, of lowly birth, a farm boy of common class, poor, illiterate and without distinction other than being religiously inclined; he attended revivals, was in these anxious circles honestly seeking religion and to learn which was the right church; and calling upon the Lord in simple faith that he might know. Both the Father and the Son in a pillar of light descended, and in teaching him commanded that "he join no religious sect, as their creeds were all an abomination in His sight."

And this blow, by an ignorant son of poverty at fourteen years of age, in the face of all Christendom, was an insult to the dignity of all priestly learning, greatness and wealth; with all their millions in Bible, missionary and other societies for converting the world, all their greatness defied and denounced by an ignorant boy, their contempt led to hatred and persecution. And when that same boy became a man, he claimed having revelations, and that an angel had delivered to him golden plates containing the history of a fallen people, and that God, through him was about to restore the ancient gospel in its purity, which, if true, would blot out all their greatness. And so inspired by hate, they made lies their weapons with which to fight the truth; both of which are attributes of the devil, whose servants they were, as "blind leaders of the blind." The leaders blinded by envy, jealousy, self interest and hate while the multitude were blinded by the popular prejudice and cry of "away with them"; and all going together to the pit; just as the Master saw, and upon the cross "prayed His Father to forgive them as they knew not what they did." Our Prophet Joseph like the Master, was held in contempt by learned priests, bigots and hypocrites, and like Him, was scorned, despised, and derided by the rich; and by all Christendom was hated without cause, and persecuted unto death by those who would not know him.

It is true that the Prophet seemed to lay the foundation of our Church with a military spirit, and so, unlike the present, he taught us resistance to all oppression; to defend our liberties with the sword. But I can now see as the temple of truth and love is built higher by the Master's hand that resentment brought to us only calamity and the reverse of our hopes. And I can also see now that unnecessary offences were at times given to strengthen the prejudice or hate of our enemies; for that was the infancy of the Church and its days of child-like enthusiasm and great hopes. And

at times, no doubt, leading elders made child-like boasts to irritate our enemies.

But of that period and experience, as compared with today, you can realize but little, and so I do not marvel at your criticisms upon the common manner of disposing of the question of "causes," for all is now so changed.

And as since, before 1830 the Lord began, through the Prophet Joseph, to turn the keys of knowledge to flood the world with new light and life, or to plant in the "three measures of meal" that "leaven" through which all the world will yet become "leavened", which has since its inception been working in the world's thought to produce great change, politically, religiously, socially, financially and scientifically--the increased light that came to earth through the keys of knowledge turned by the Prophet Joseph for which he was derided, hated, and killed, but towards which all searching eyes of inquiry are now turning with new thoughts leading towards the great truths of the gospel.

While many principles of our religion are being counterfeited by the world to throw dust in the eyes of the thoughtless, that they may not discover that this is the great day of "God's preparation" for regenerating the earth with a Zion for its Capital City.

"The Prophet and his hobbies," The Prophet fully realized that arrayed against him, or the truth, was combined all the religious, political, financial, educational and social powers of the world. And all this power he had to meet with wisdom that came alone from God. He had no time or place for "hobbies", but stood boldly to defend the truth with such weapons and helps as came to him of the Lord.

P. P. Pratt, through his "Voice of Warning to all the people," published at an early day in Kirtland, was a primary exponent of the Prophet's theology. And the Prophet's reply to journalists who early, in Nauvoo, asked him for a copy of the "Mormon creed" has since become our "articles of Faith." And if the Prophet did have a "hobby" it was to provide for the poor and to defend the liberties of the people, for when he organized the Nauvoo Legion, and for which he laid down his life. And the principle of his government or influence over his people is explained in his reply to a church dignitary, I think a Catholic Bishop, who at Nauvoo Mansion asked him "by what power he governed so great a people?" He replied, "I do not govern them, I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves," which was a "hobby", if he had any.

"The Prophet's teaching of love" was not to work upon the sympathies and sensibilities of the people, but by his great example and self-sacrifice, and in showing us that while all the world were against us, our only hope was in our union, and that union was only possible as the fruit of our love for each other. And in teaching us the "Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man," we could begin to see why we should "love God supremely, and our brother as ourselves." He taught us that God was the great head of human procreation---was really and truly the father of both our spirits and our bodies; that we were but parts of a great whole, mutually and equally dependent upon each other, according to our conditions. And in our love of God we show, as do the members of our bodies, naturally a greater love and protection for our head. But this reasoning could not be fully understood by all, and as I have said before, in the infancy of the church, our minds and views were more narrow, and we were more petulant, resentful and perhaps more vindictive then than now, that the principles of charity and love are seen to be the life spring

and core principle of our gospel. And now that we see the temple of charity, union and love, reared above its foundation, once guarded by the "Nauvoo Legion," commanded by the Traitor, "Joab, General in Israel," we are led to feel that those were the days of childhood's mistakes, yet all leading to great purposes as was the call of Judas to the apostleship. And we are as a people today, in wisdom, stature and power with God, just what we have grown to be through accumulating experience in the Father's care.

"Early day marriage among the Saints." Replying to your question, relating to early day marriages in the Church, I will say, that there were no arbitrary rules relating to marriage, other than that the ceremony be in strict accordance with statute law of the state. And as no one of the elders at a very early day took to themselves the right to perform that ceremony, it was left to the Justice of the Peace, until Elder Seymour Brunson at Kirtland, assumed that prerogative and was patronized until others followed his example; and I remember of no marriage by the Prophet until at Nauvoo. And for marrying with the outside, the rule from the first was as now, strongly against it by council, but tolerant as to common fellowship, while all the wise understand that such marriage is of no eternal worth.

In reply to your question on Early proselyting and attitude of the Church toward other denominations, "I must say again, that in the rise of the Church all advantages of wealth, education and popularity were with our enemies; while the few poor, unlearned elders, called of the Lord, were at every disadvantage. But in having the truth and a trust in the Lord, and they at times, through their faith and zeal, enthused by the spirit of their callings, were led to use the gospel truths as a battering ram, to demolish creeds and hypocrisy, as fabrics "built upon the sand,"

instead of first rearing in view of all the gospel temple of truth and love, as a home of refuge for the honest in heart, when their houses built upon the "sand" should fall.

And our labors then were perhaps not always in the wisdom and charity that the experience and learning of subsequent years has brought. And in proportion as we were derided, persecuted and held in contempt by a hireling priesthood, whose creeds we knew were but an abomination, and all their ministry but frauds, and so we regarded their show of sincerity as hallow mockery and pretence, all for popularity or gain. And of all the sects, we regarded the Catholic church as the great head of priestcraft and hypocrisy. And so far as I am personally concerned, I am hardly rid of that view and feeling yet, that they are really but "garnished sepulchers" filled with the bones of a dead and rotten past.

And right here a full chapter could be written of young men, who, while yet but boys, went forth in ignorance, and through their humility and in the spirit of their calling, soon became mighty both in word and in deed, and for a season would be as brilliant stars of our hopes, but through forgetting the Lord, in remembrance of their own greatness, too many, like bright meteors, sank from sight to rise no more, in fulfillment of His word that "no flesh should glory in His presence"; while others, trusting in their own strength, were led into sins and were swallowed up in their transgressions, after a labor in faithfulness for a season.

"Pioneers and Oregon." With others, from the Prophet at an early day, I took in the idea of our pioneering or exploring, to find somewhere in the west a place of safety for the Church. And while some thoughts would be of valleys in the mountains, an oasis in the "Great American Desert," others did talk of Oregon, but not in the Prophet's day did any properly

organized company start. But at his death the star of our hope for a home of peace began more plainly to rise in the Great West, somewhere to be found. But where, we knew not. Among the speculations as to where, Oregon was talked of, and then of Van Couver's Island, which, with its great advantages for Mormon safety from persecution, was pointed out by our professed friend Stephen A. Douglas, who came to the Nauvoo Mansion in 1845, then kept open by myself, soon after which the praises of Upper California began to be rehearsed and sung. But by Brigham Young, to my knowledge, there was never a pointer given as to our destination as a people. And although in organizing the Pioneer Emigration, I was appointed captain of fifty wagons, and was among the first to cross the Mississippi, and camped on Sugar Creek, I yet heard no suggestion by our leader as to where we were going, nor did I know of a "Scout, mountaineer, or guide" being in our camp for one day, or for anyone to give a word to point or direct our way but Brigham Young. And never until after our arrival in Salt Lake Valley, did I see Fremont, [John C. Fremont] Kit Carson, Peg Leg Smith or Captain [Jim] Bridger, all of whom I saw after our Modern Moses guided alone by revelation, had led us to the Salt Lake Valley.

"Of changes and mistakes," I hardly feel inspired to write, For change is everywhere and in everything, and liability of change and mistakes is with every one, and if the Master "learned obedience" through experience, how much more need of experience have we?. I believe that the mistakes of a true man will be as steps upon which he will rise to greater wisdom, exertions, and to broader views. And why should not the experience of yesterday make us the wiser today? We are not always in the same mind and feeling; for when prompted by hunger, He cursed the tree that bore Him no fruit; and when angry with scourges he drove from the Temple "money changers" and kicked over their tables. But this was

not His mood when at the grave of Lazarus He so wept that the guests exclaimed, "Behold how He loveth him"; nor when in view of calamities to come He wept over Jerusalem; and does it not look like a mistake that He chose as one of His apostles a Judas to betray Him?

And now all of this, to a great degree, finds a parallel in the life of the Prophet Joseph. He was already to fight for the rights and liberties of his friends, and his heart was ever full of sympathy and tears, to sorrow with those he loved; and he too chose among his counsellors and friends those who did betray and bring him to death. And no man, seemingly, could make greater mistakes in selection of associates than did the Prophet; and this, with the many other things of which he was accursed, his enemies held as evidence that he was a fallen prophet. And even the Lord not only at times admonished him for neglect of duty; but speaks of his "sins" and "transgressions", which would imply that he was not always equally enlightened and guided by inspiration. And in the earliest days he did so make mistakes that the Lord at one time withheld from him the keys of his calling. And he does not in his own history hesitate to say that after conversing with both the Father and the Son, and being administered to by holy angels, that he made great mistakes and was overcome in transgression and sins. And as to mistakes through want of properly discerning the "times and seasons" of prophetic events, we were over seventy years ago taught by our leaders to believe that the coming of Christ and the millennial reign was much nearer than then we believe it to be now. And mistakes through imaginations and groundless hopes have been all along the line of our experience as a Church. And are not our reverses, disappointments and mistakes permitted to be monitors and guides for the future? And I do know of things done and of principles taught by the Prophet Joseph that our Prophet, Joseph F., would not today

accept as an example for him to imitate. And is not our growth in wisdom the cumulated fruit of our experimental or active life?

"President Brigham Young." Of Brigham Young as President of the Church, I will again bear this as a faithful testimony that I do know and bear record that upon the head of Brigham Young as chief, with the Apostleship in full, was by the voice of the Prophet Joseph in my hearing, laid the full responsibility of bearing of the kingdom of God to all the world. And I do further bear as a testimony, faithful and true, to the Church and to all the world, that at a conference of the whole Church, at Nauvoo, subsequent to the Prophet's death and return of the absent Apostles, that I sat in the assembly near to President Rigdon, closely attentive to his appeal to the conference to recognize and sustain his claim as "Guardian for the Church." And I was perhaps, to a degree, forgetful of what I knew to be the rights and duties of the apostleship, and as he closed his address and sat down, my back was partly turned to the seat occupied by Apostle Brigham Young and other Apostles, when suddenly, and as from Heaven, I heard the voice of the Prophet Joseph, that thrilled my whole being, and quickly turning around I saw in the transfiguration of Brigham Young, the tall, straight and portly form of the Prophet Joseph Smith, clothed in a sheen of light, covering him to his feet; and I heard the real and perfect voice of the Prophet, even to the whistle, as in years past caused by the loss of a tooth said to have been broken out by the mob at Hyrum. This view, or vision, although but for seconds, was to me as vivid and real as the glare of lightning or the voice of thunder from the heavens, and so deeply was I impressed with what I saw and heard in this transfiguration, that for years I dare not publicly tell what was given me of the Lord to see. But when in later years I did publicly bear this testimony, I found that others would testify to having seen and

heard the same. But to what proportion of the congregation who were present I could never know. But I do know that this, my testimony is true.

The Prophet's lost tooth, to which I alluded was, as generally understood, broken out by the mob at Hyrum while trying to pry open his mouth to strangle him with acid, which from time, until the tooth was replaced by a dentist neighbor, a year or so previous to his death, there had a whistle-like sound to accompany all his public speaking which I again plainly heard at the time of which I write.

And while I do know that Brigham Young as President of the Church, was the right man in the right place, and a great leader for Israel, I still know that he never claimed to be perfect in all of his ways, but that, like his brethren, he at times was liable to mistakes. And to some of his mistakes I am a witness, and also that he saw some of his mistakes and nobly corrected them.

And to show more fully his leading traits and general "personal character", I will go back to relate that soon after embracing the gospel in 1832, Brigham Young started with his brother from their home in the state of New York, to visit the Prophet at Kirtland, and on their way called upon us at Pomfret, N. Y., who had received the gospel just before them, and remaining overnight with my sister's husband, Lyman R. Sherman. And while at evening in animated conversation upon the gifts as promised to accompany the gospel, the spirit came upon Brother Sherman in mighty power, and he opened his mouth in an unknown tongue, to the great surprise and joy of all, and I think that Brother Brigham also at that time received the gift; Brother Lyman R. Sherman being the first known to have spoken in the gift of tongues by the power of God in this dispensation. And on Brother Brigham arriving in Kirtland

at the Prophet's home, being called to lead in family prayer, as a surprise even to the Prophet, he opened his mouth in a strange tongue, the first heard by him, which he said at once was in the language of our first parents. And he, at that time, made the Prediction upon the head of Brigham Young that "at some period he would become the leader of the Church, and that there would be but one danger to beset him, and that would be his love of wealth." These things were told me by Brother Sherman at near the time of their occurrence, who remained almost as the right hand of the Prophet until the day of his death. And while I am witness that after the Prophet's death that Brigham Young became Israel's great leader, a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, to the Church in all the world, I yet know that he was a great financier and at times did manifest a love for wealth, and did make mistakes, some of which he may not have lived fully to rectify. But with all of his mistakes, private or public, his voice was ever the voice of the true shepherd to Israel. And in looking for mistakes, I feel admonished to look after my own personality, which, with all of his faults, might perhaps leave me, in comparison, too small for a full claim to notice.

From his young manhood, all through his after life, in close observation, I saw him through every calling, rise to become Israel's great chief, holding every key of Priesthood and power pertaining to the Kingdom of God on the earth and the salvation for the dead. And I saw, too, that through his great capacity as financier, with his love of riches, that he became as the Prophet had foretold, possessed of great wealth, which, although it may have had an influence to a degree upon his children, it had none to draw him from the love or duties of his high calling, in which, at times, he seemed fully tested, and the confidence of the people was towards him from his first assuming the Presidency.

His great influence as a leader seemed to lie in his quick discernment, his ready decisions, and in his right judgement, in placing men and things in their proper position, and to their best possible use; while his intuitive magnetism, his kindly sympathy in afflictions, his noble bearing as a brother, friend and as a man in its true and full sense, inspired confidence, respect and love in all who really knew him. And as for comparing him with others filling the same position, I can only think of them all, and each, as strong and mighty pillars in the Great Temple of our Hopes, equal in strength and use, but each molded by the Master hand in symmetry and beauty to a difference in form and mind but not in Priesthood and purpose.

"Brigham Young, his interest in education." Upon this question I will not prolong remarks. With Brigham Young from 1832 until his death in 1877 I was often closely associated, and I know him to have been a pioneer, a promoter, and a true friend to education, and although he was not himself cultured in scholarship or refined by classic education, yet he by nature was highly cultured and refined both in habit, demeanor and conversation, and no one could associated with him and not be impressed by his refining influence. And so far as the influence of music and drama tend to civilize and elevate, or refine society, credit should be due to Brigham Young as the pioneer chief in their promotion and establishment in the heart of the "Great American Desert," to give musical tone and inspiration to all its divisions into states.

But we should not forget that Brigham Young was the leader of a people, driven before the cannon and bayonet, of a heartless and cruel mob, who fled across the Mississippi in winter, leaving their homes without opportunity to provide food or clothing; and plundered of all they could not carry, and to go they knew not where; and to save the lives

of all of these many thousands now devolved on Brigham Young, even to look after the possibilities for transportation, to learn the way, to open roads, to see that all had food, and then protect them from the tomahawk, scalping knife and bullet; and when in the Valleys, to measure out land, to formulate laws, and to counsel the people how to save a pittance from swarms of crickets and locusts that ravaged their field.

And for some years, President Young, with all the people, were devotedly seeking to save the souls of the people alive, from starvation, with hope of a better day for education.

But enthused by the spirit of our leader, in every way-station on the road, in every town or ward settled after arriving in Utah, about the first house built by the people was for public school and meeting purposes. And that Brigham Young opposed education, with desire to keep his people in ignorance, is a monster in falsehood, for he was not only the pioneer in education in the mountain states, but so long as he lived he assisted it liberally with his means, and the Brigham Young Academy and College, in Utah, will continue to bear fruit to the honor of his name after his traducers with their falsehoods, are buried in forgetfulness, under the contempt of God and all just men.

"What I know of the objects and purposes, in raising the Mormon Battalion." To show you that I did know the motive of President Young in sending the Battalion, I will say that as one of that special Council organized by the Prophet, of which I have written, and of which President Young being the head, I still hold my seat and still had a voice in all general movements relating to our exodus as a people from Nauvoo. And I will say that this council, as a legislature of the people, did continue under the Presidency and became the Colonial Council, or legislature of

the State of Deseret. And I was present at the arrival of Colonel Little and company at Garden Grove, with the requisition, by Gout for five hundred volunteers for the American Army, served upon the fleeing Mormons as a test to their loyalty and patriotism by Senator Benton of Missouri. It was well understood at the time, as the subject was fully ventilated by the council, and all comprehended it as a great sacrifice and that there was no reward or benefit offered by the government in any degree.

It was a test of the people's and our Prophet's loyalty and patriotism while under arrest; and this patriotism and loyalty was now to be placed upon the alter at a great disadvantage. And would we stand the test--even as did our Father Abraham answer this great question?

At Garden Grove all of the enlistment was filled, and now, this was unequalled patriotism and valor of the Sons of Zion, who sacrificed aged parents, wives and children, sweethearts and other dear ones, by leaving them homeless, unprotected, and to the mercy of the wild and naked plains.

That such a privilege was sought for by the Mormons, should be stamped as a monstrosity in falsehood. But that it was a great and far-reaching test of loyalty all will admit, which was to establish the truth of Mormon love and loyalty to that heaven-inspired and God-given Constitution of the United States, which will yet give guarantee of liberty and equal rights to all people of the earth and nations shall "learn war no more," and shall learn to better comprehend that great principle of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

I do not think of more to write.

Signed, Benjamin F. Johnson